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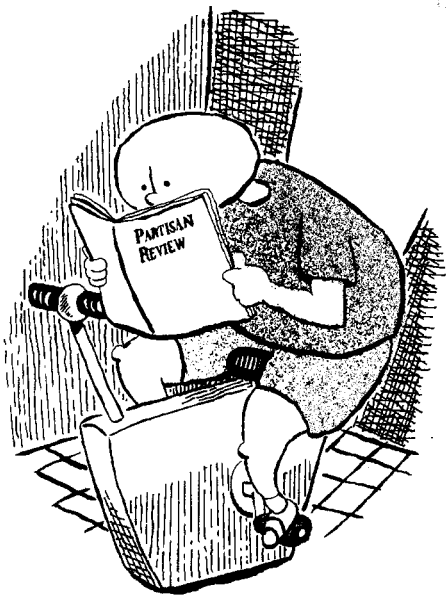

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Comment

Partisan Review has a new cover. Of course, the outside of a magazine is not as important as its inside, but to some extent it does reflect its personality. In general, good covers are appropriate to the nature of a publication. For example, *Fortune* has a solid upper-class look; *Time* has a down-to-earth appearance; the *New Criterion* has a serious cover; *Commentary* announces that it has something to say; and both the *New Republic* and the *Weekly Standard* boldly and colorfully announce what is in them. We are too close to our own cover to define it properly. However, we want to indicate that we are on top of trends while perpetuating our tradition.

In addition, we also decided to join those magazines that are being polybagged, so that all of our readers will get their copies in perfect condition. Furthermore, we invite you to send us your impressions of the way we are helping to usher in the new millennium. Happy New Year!

EK

The selection from Ralph Ellison's posthumous novel *Juneteenth* that appeared in the *New Yorker* (April 12, 1999) was an unfortunate example of clichés and overwriting, with a number of purple passages. Yet it reminded me of some of the encounters I had with Ellison.

One of the earlier incidents I recall happened in late 1962. We were about to go to press, and needed some more material for the magazine, so I called up Ralph and asked him if he had something we could use. He said, without any air of pomposity, that he had a selection from his new novel. Since there was no time to mail it, he read it to me over the phone. It sounded good, and I said, "O.K., send it to me." It was probably the only time that a manuscript was accepted at *Partisan Review* by being read over the phone. There were also instances of simple camaraderie, when I and my former wife spent many boozy evenings at the Ellisons' apartment on the Upper West Side, with Ralph, Fanny, and their huge police dog.

Another telling incident was a lunch I had with Ellison and Richard Poirier at the faculty club at Rutgers University, where Ellison was then writer-in-residence. Poirier had just been appointed head of the English department, and he had not hired Ellison. In addition, Poirier was in principle against writers-in-residence. As tensions rose at the lunch, I tried to calm things down by asking Ellison what he thought of Lyndon Johnson, who had recently become President of the United States. Ellison stiffened in his chair, stuck his chest out, and said solemnly, "As an

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Oklahoman and a black, and as a writer, I would say the results are not yet in." Apparently the success of *Invisible Man*, the invitations to conferences, and general treatment as a celebrity had gone to Ellison's head and he had become a bit pompous.

Another time, when we were in Rome, as were the Ellisons, we invited him to join us for a ride into the outskirts. We rented a car, and I asked Ralph, who was more accustomed than I to Italian traffic, to drive. We were on our way out of the city when, at one point, Ralph's impatience got the better of him and he shouted through his window: "Get out of the way, you lousy wops!" It seemed that Ralph, especially in Italy, was more an American than a black—which jived with his sense of himself as a writer.

When Edith Kurzweil and I had lunch with Ellison shortly before he came to our conference at Rutgers in 1991, a number of members of the Century Club came up to say hello to him. When I asked him later on why he was so much more popular at the Club than I, he answered jauntily, "I integrated this joint."

Shortly before his death, Ralph was supposed to visit us, but instead Fanny called to say that he wasn't feeling well, and asked if we could recommend a good doctor. We arranged for him to see our own physician, but Ellison never called him. He died only a few weeks later, from cancer of the pancreas.

WP

On Thursday, December 9, 1999, I was struck by the following headline in the *New York Times*: "Pearl Harbor Truly a Sneak Attack, Papers Show." Apparently, it took fifty-eight years for most of our historians to learn what everyone then knew—that Japan had planned a sneak attack in order to disable the U.S. Navy, while keeping open so-called diplomatic discussions.

I was in my early teens on December 7, 1941, and closely followed the news about the war in Europe which I had escaped by the proverbial skin of my teeth, and was hoping that my two sets of grandparents and other relatives also might elude the Nazis. My information about Japan was sketchy. It came from my uncle's family, who had emigrated to Shanghai. Thus I was aware of their hardships rather than of that country's politics. Yet I knew, as did everyone who listened to President Roosevelt's announcement on the radio that afternoon, that "deceit rather than bumbling caused Tokyo's failure to warn Washington that war was imminent." It seems that this fact, which recently was "discovered" by

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Japanese historian Takeo Iguchi in the archives of Japan's foreign ministry, surprised his American colleagues. Even though "many of Japan's top historians had long spoken of the supposed embassy mix-up that delayed the delivery of Tokyo's final message to Washington as an 'ugly blemish' on the country's history," he concludes that this "blemish belongs to those who engaged in deliberate deception, or who have failed to ever go into the documentary evidence." The *New York Times* mentioned by name the top American historians of Japan, who had been focusing on American communications blunders "since the early 1960s." Now, they perceive Professor Iguchi's findings as a new historical drama that will encourage further research. When, I keep wondering, will the public be informed of what during World War II every child knew, and when will historians begin to focus on what really happened, rather than perpetuate historicist interpretations and anti-American ideology? Of course, it is every citizen's right to hate his or her country, but historians have an obligation to search for and teach the truth—however unattainable this finally might be—rather than project their own frustrations onto their students.

The *New York Times* article concludes that "the evolution right now would seem to be back in the direction of the kind of interpretive leanings that existed in this country during the war. But these sorts of vicissitudes are constant in history." It has been said that interpretive history is a sort of boondoggle that allows for ever more dances on the heads of pins. However, even if someone in the state department bungled and the telegram terminating negotiations was delayed by a day or two, didn't it take a lot longer to prepare a massive attack to sink the U.S. Navy? Subsequently, most historians actively fought with all other Americans to win that war against the Axis powers. They did not go in for postmodern interpretations.

Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan*, however exaggerated the story might be, did depict some of the horrors of World War II, which we used to see in Newsreel theaters as events evolved. I am not advocating American or any other kind of chauvinism. But I am appalled to have learned that Professor Iguchi's "discovery" only "gradually would work its way into [American] textbook accounts of the start of the war." That *Time* rather than the *New York Times* had described the Pearl Harbor attack as "murder hidden by a toothy smile," I believe, is not a good enough reason to discredit unthinkingly and systematically America's motives—even though some of them often might be faulty, and a mixed bag.

EK

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DENIS DONOGHUE

T. S. Eliot and the Poem Itself

I.

I STARTED READING Eliot's poems and essays when I went to Dublin in September 1946 to enroll at University College, Dublin and work toward an honors B.A. in Latin and English, with History, Mathematics, and Irish as my minor subjects. There were no courses available to me in modern English and American literature. Professor Jeremiah J. Hogan, who ordained these matters, received his B.Litt. at Oxford and held to the Oxford view that the literature in English that needed study extended from *Beowulf* to Wordsworth and Coleridge. After that, as C. S. Lewis is supposed to have said, it was just books. Yeats was taught as part of a separate course in Anglo-Irish Literature and Drama, but not as a figure in the history of modem poetry. Hogan admired Newman and Hopkins, mainly because they were Catholics, but he did not teach them for their bearing on modern literature. When I wanted to read Eliot, Pound, Frost, and Stevens, I was left to my own resources.

I recall that what I mostly felt, reading Eliot's *Selected Poems*, was bewilderment. I managed somehow to come to terms with "Prufrock" and the Preludes, but *The Waste Land* had to be left for further readings. "Ash-Wednesday" was a different problem. The Christian references and the liturgical forms were familiar to me: I knew the Catholic litanies by heart. But I couldn't see what was going on, or how the secular bits fitted the devotional sequences. I settled for the thrill of yielding to a few unforgettable lines:

> The Lady is withdrawn
> In a white gown, to contemplation, in a white gown

and the gorgeous passage beginning:

> Blown hair is sweet, brown hair over the mouth blown,
> Lilac and brown hair.

I could not have said why those lines took possession of my mind. I had not yet learnt to note the propriety and certitude of the rhythm, the convincing power of the cadence. Even now, I can't say why the repetition

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of "in a white gown" after "to contemplation" is so "right," or explain the effect of Eliot's changing one letter to get from "blown" to "brown" and back again, making another repetition across the "brown" in the middle. Nor had I any notion of a poetics governing Eliot's procedures in this or any other poem.

II.

ELIOT DID NOT WRITE a *Poetics* or an *Aesthetic*: he did not think of himself in competition with Aristotle, Lessing, Kant, Hegel, Croce, or Vasconcelos. He did not try for anything as systematic as Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* or Stanley Burnshaw's *The Seamless Web*. Whenever he found himself approaching a large question of Theory, he backed off, reminding himself that poets engage in Theory because they are not writing poems. At the end of *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, he says: "If, as James Thomson observed, 'lips only sing when they cannot kiss,' it may also be that poets only talk when they cannot sing. I am content to leave my theorising about poetry at this point. The sad ghost of Coleridge beckons to me from the shadows." Besides, Eliot knew that I. A. Richards would always have the advantage of him in the theory of poetry.

The most lasting parts of Eliot's prose are his appreciations of particular authors, but the timeliest parts, the essays we have reason to recite and to keep going back to, are those in which he emphasized that literature exists and that it is not a mere delivery service for political, religious, or other values. "I have assumed as axiomatic," he wrote in "The Function of Criticism," "that a creation, a work of art, is autotelic; and that criticism, by definition, is *about* something other than itself." If so much is agreed, it becomes possible to examine the relations between a work of literature and other considerations, metaphysical, moral, and political. If it is not agreed, we find ourselves beset by confusion of categories, as at present when it is difficult to gain a hearing for the claim that a work of literature exists with just as much autonomy as a piece of music, a sculpture, or a painting.

It would be futile to try to deduce a poetics or an aesthetic from Eliot's essays in the theory of poetry and poetic drama. I am content to refer to certain passages in which he indicates what one's relation to a work of literature might be—or rather, passages in which he describes an ideal sequence, starting with the first shock or blow of recognition and culminating in the incorporation of the work of literature as a constituent

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of one's life. (Frank Kermode has drawn attention to this sequence in his introduction to Eliot's *Selected Prose*.) In May 1935 Eliot wrote to Stephen Spender:

> You don't really criticize any author to whom you have never surrendered yourself. . . .Even just the bewildering minute counts; you have to give yourself up, and then recover yourself, and the third moment is having something to say, before you have wholly forgotten both surrender and recovery. Of course the self recovered is never the same as the self before it was given.

"The bewildering minute" is a phrase from *The Revenger's Tragedy*. Eliot quoted it in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), again the following year in an essay on Massinger, and ten years later in an essay on Tourneur:

> Does the silkworm expend her yellow labours
> For thee? For thee does she undo herself?
> Are lordships sold to maintain ladyships
> For the poor benefit of a bewildering minute?

A more authoritative text reads: "For the poor benefit of a bewitching minute." Eliot preferred the reading I've quoted. We find a similar gesture, but transformed, in the fifth part of *The Waste Land*:

> My friend, blood shaking my heart
> The awful daring of a moment's surrender
> Which an age of prudence can never retract.

And there is a memorable passage, to place beside those lines, in Eliot's major essay on Dante:

> The experience of a poem is the experience both of a moment and of a lifetime. It is very much like our intenser experiences of other human beings. There is a first, or an early moment which is unique, of shock and surprise, even of terror (*Ego dominus tuus*); a moment which can never be forgotten, but which is never repeated integrally; and yet which would become destitute of significance if it did not survive in a larger whole of experience; which survives inside a deeper and a calmer feeling. The majority of poems one outgrows and outlives, as one outgrows and outlives the majority

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> of human passions: Dante's is one of those which one can only just hope to grow up to at the end of life.

The sequence of three moments as Eliot described it is under Dante's auspices. More than any other poet, Dante suggested to Eliot the possibility of "redeeming the time," transforming mere *tempus* into *aevum* in the light of what Eliot in the essay on Dante called "the high dream." There, too, Eliot notes "how skilfully Dante expresses (in Canto XXX of the *Purgatorio*) the recrudescence of an ancient passion in a new emotion, in a new situation, which comprehends, enlarges, and gives a meaning to it." *Conosco i segni dell'antica fiamma*. But it is in the essay on Marston that Eliot indicates most clearly the three moments and the pattern they ideally fulfill.

Marston's plays are mostly bad. Even *The Malcontent* is a poor thing by comparison with the best of Webster, Tourneur, and Massinger. But Eliot nonetheless feels that there is a quality of genius in Marston that can't be indicated by quoting a few speeches. He thinks that Marston, especially in *Sophonisba*, is saying "something else than appears in the literal actions and characters whom he manipulates." Trying to articulate the "something else," Eliot writes:

> It is possible that what distinguishes poetic drama from prosaic drama is a kind of doubleness in the action, as if it took place on two planes at once. . . .In poetic drama a certain apparent irrelevance may be the symptom of this doubleness; or the drama has an under-pattern, less manifest than the theatrical one. We sometimes feel, in following the words and behaviour of some of the characters of Dostoevsky, that they are living at once on the plane that we know and on some other plane of reality from which we are shut out: their behaviour does not seem crazy, but rather in conformity with the laws of some world that we cannot perceive. More fitfully, and with less power, this doubleness appears here and there in the work of Chapman, especially in the two *Bussy D'Ambois* plays. . . . It is not by writing quotable "poetic" passages, but by giving us the sense of something behind, more real than any of his personages and their action, that Marston established himself among the writers of genius.

The difficulty Eliot felt in expressing this doubleness is at one with the problem he confronted in writing *Sweeney Agonistes* and the play—*Murder in the Cathedral*—he was working on in 1934 when he wrote the essay on Marston: how to present such characters as Sweeney and

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the Archbishop living at once on the plane of reality they share with other people and on another plane of higher perception on which they are alone; and how to convey a sense, in those works, of a still more comprehensive pattern in which the particular moments find their meaning and value. He is again thinking of Dante and Beatrice, the lady olive-crowned with a white veil. Near the end of the essay on Marston and still referring to *Sophonisba*, he tries again: "In spite of the tumultuousness of the action, and the ferocity and horror of certain parts of the play, there is an underlying serenity; and as we familiarize ourselves with the play we perceive a pattern behind the pattern into which the characters deliberately involve themselves; the kind of pattern which we perceive in our own lives only at rare moments of inattention and detachment, drowsing in sunlight." Presumably we have already surrendered ourselves to "the bewildering minute," then to the verbal context in which the minute finds itself, and gradually—the third phase—we intuit a pattern beyond the overt pattern of the words. At that point the whole episode becomes indistinguishable from ourselves. We have made the play or the poem part of our life.

This concern for the pattern beyond the pattern is characteristic of mythical thinking. In *Language and Myth* Cassirer maintains that the mythical consciousness differs from other forms of consciousness in the sequence of its attentions:

> It seems only natural to us that the world should present itself to our inspection and observation as a pattern of definite forms, each with its own perfectly determinate spatial limits that give it its specific individuality. If we see it as a whole, this whole nevertheless consists of clearly distinguishable units, which do not melt into each other, but preserve their identity that sets them definitely apart from the identity of all the others. But for the mythmaking consciousness these separate elements are not thus separately given, but have to be originally and gradually derived from the whole; the process of culling and sorting out individual forms has yet to be gone through.

It follows that "the forms of mythical invention reflect, not the objective character of things, but the forms of human practices."

This seems to mean that the principle of form, for the mythical consciousness, precedes the recognition of any and all particular forms: it divines the principle of beauty before the disclosure of any beautiful thing. A principle logically precedes its particles. In Eliot's sequence of

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three moments, then, a mythmaking consciousness would divine the whole, the pattern beyond the pattern, as if it were already there, in principle, waiting to be fulfilled in practice and intuited by a particular act of reading. The third moment would then in principle be the first. In Eliot, as in Valéry, the principle, the ground of our beseeching, is language. It may therefore be desirable to re-phrase Eliot's sequence. The first moment is still the original surrender to the words, in my case to the gypsy phrases of "Ash-Wednesday." But the surrender is made to the phrases with a sense that those phrases are individuated forms of a larger whole, Language itself. The second moment is indeed the recognition of a pattern a little apart from the phrases but dependent upon the poem. And in the third moment we apprehend what a mythmaking consciousness has always believed in, the comprehensively enabling character of Language as first principle. Reading then becomes an act by which we arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.

III.

None of these considerations occurred to me when I started reading Eliot or even when I got a teaching job at University College, Dublin. I taught several courses—Shakespeare, Donne, Jacobean Tragedy, Seventeenth-Century Prose, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, and Blake. My Ph.D. dissertation, revised, became my first book *The Third Voice: Modern British and American Verse Drama*, largely a study of the plays of Yeats and Eliot. But the context of my reading was not entirely my own. I taught at the old University College building in Earlsfort Terrace, and less than a mile away was Trinity College, where the major figure in the English Department, my more-than-equal and opposite number, was the English poet and critic Donald Davie. He was six years older than me and better established in the profession. For one thing, he was a graduate of Cambridge University and was set, after several years in Dublin, to go back to Cambridge in 1958 as a university lecturer in the English Faculty and a fellow of Gonville and Caius College. We were not intimate friends. He was morally intimidating, with a touch of the commissar about him, and he was severe on those members of the profession who didn't share his convictions. I noted that he used the word "infidel" more freely and more deliberately than I supposed it had ever been used since the seventeenth century. But he was never frivolous; he was seriously engaged with everything he read—indeed, grave all the way through. We were friends enough to meet every now and then in his

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rooms at Trinity to read poems and talk about poetry, and I felt myself honored by his company.

I had no special theory of poetry apart from my sense of the miscellany of poems, brought into some degree of order by the conventions of literary history. Davie had a few favorite notions. One of them was that there were three useful analogies for the understanding of literature in general and modern literature in particular. Poetry was like theater, as in Yeats; like music, as in Pasternak and Eliot; and like sculpture, as in Pound. Davie hadn't much to say about Yeats or the theater, but he was always ready to talk about Eliot and Pound, especially about Pound. He regarded Yeats and Eliot as major writers but also as forces to be suspected, adepts of different versions of Symbolism. Yeats's version kept his poems and plays out of the world by preventing him from looking hard at anything in the world. Like Pound and Robert Lowell, Davie maintained that Yeats couldn't see anything, dazzled as he was by the symbol he held up as a veil or projected as a cloud before it. "Another emblem there!" Eliot's poems and especially *Four Quartets* worked to the limit of possibility and decorum the resources of modern French poetry from Laforgue to Valéry, but this attribute made him an equivocal presence in English and American poetry. It was in Valéry's poems that the Paterian aspiration of the arts toward the condition of music was most arduously pursued. Eliot was Valéry with the difference of being an American from St. Louis. Davie thought that French Symbolism with that emphasis was a beguiling distraction for poets who wrote in English. He hoped that *Four Quartets* would bring it to an end, so far as it entered the history of English and American poetry. The most acute defect of Symbolism was that it had one preoccupation: itself, its linguistic processes, the charm of fulfilling itself in verbal music. Taking up a phrase of H. M. McLuhan's, Davie maintained that Eliot's poems obeyed "the symbolist procedure of 'juxtaposition without copula,' the setting down of images side by side with a space between them, a space that does not need to be bridged." Whatever merits might be claimed for the procedure, Davie hoped that it would be superseded by a poetry of "urbane and momentous statement," as he called it in *Purity of Diction in English Verse*, neo-Augustan rather than neo-Romantic or post-Romantic. Pound was the master to be followed.

Sculpture was the analogy to be pursued. But there was a distinction to be made between the main impulses of sculpture. Adrian Stokes's books and Pound's *Gaudier-Brzeska* clarified for Davie the moral difference between carving and modeling. In modeling, the material to be worked on, indeed the whole world, is deemed to be endlessly malleable,

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like clay in one's hands: it has no character, no rights, in itself. But according to Davie, the carver feels that "the form he wants is already present in the marble" and that it is his privilege "to make what is already there reveal itself." Pound was a carver, as Augustan as Swift and Pope. Poetry under the sign of carving "has to do with a reality which is as fully and undeniably *out there*, as certainly other than us and confronting us, as is the block of marble where it lies in the quarry before the sculptor." In "Two Analogies for Poetry"—which he regarded as his most far-reaching essay in those days—Davie urged poets who engaged with the world through its natural and physical forms to think of themselves as exploring "the same reality as the sciences explore, but with different categories and different instruments." When the reality to be engaged was metaphysical, such poets should claim "to be exploring the same reality as religion or ontology." In the same essay Davie attacked the assumption, which he ascribed to Symbolism, that physical or metaphysical reality *out there* could be turned into "a psychological reality *in here*, inside the artist's head." It is only in Prufrock's mind that fog behaves as a cat behaves or that an evening is like a patient etherized upon a table. Davie didn't agree that the poem is justified to the extent to which it explores the peculiarities of Prufrock's mind. Later, he presented the difference between Eliot and Pound as a difference in their sense of language: "As compared with Pound, Eliot presents himself as pre-eminently a rhetorician, a man who serves language, who waits for language to present him with its revelations; Pound by contrast would master language, instead of serving language he would make it serve—it must serve the shining and sounding world which continually throws up new forms which language must strain itself to register."

I should not give the impression that in the shining and sounding city of Dublin Davie merely kept on reciting the moral superiority of poetry-as-carving over the immorality of poetry-as-modeling or poetry-as-music. But he held to that position, as I recall in an argument with the Australian poet and critic Vincent Buckley in Davy Byrne's public house. Buckley wanted to talk about the ethics of fornication. Davie insisted on talking about the obligations of poetry. He always had a moral principle by his side. But his literary judgments were not as settled as his morality. If you compare his two books on Pound, you find that in one of them he declared *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* a masterpiece; in the other, a mess. Indeed, our friendship came to an end when I remarked, in a review of the later book on Pound, that the relation between Davie's mind and its contents had always been experimental. He took that to

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mean: Davie has never been able to think straight. A few weeks later I received a letter from him that I could not bear to answer. Once, about fifteen years later, I diffidently invited him to take part in a radio program I was preparing for the BBC on *The Waste Land*. He accepted the invitation, and performed trenchantly on the occasion, but our old friendship was gone.

IV.

In *Articulate Energy* (1955), Davie took up the issue of poetry-as-music. He believed, with Fenollosa and Pound to sustain him, that the crucial factor in poetry is syntax. Purity of diction is a major consideration, but a difference of syntax is a more comprehensive difference because it indicates the way a poet stands toward the world. Modern poetry assumes, he argued—with Eliot chiefly in mind—"that syntax in poetry is wholly different from syntax as understood by logicians and grammarians." Davie repudiated this assumption, and spoke up for logicians and grammarians, but he had to admit—as Empson did—that good poems had been achieved under its direction. He conceded that poetry-as-music is not merely a modern aberration: it is close to what he called "subjective syntax," which pleases "by the fidelity with which it follows the 'form of thought' in the poet's mind." His main examples were Coleridge's "Dejection" and "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison":

> How can a bower of lime-trees be a prison? And even as [Coleridge] begins to show how this can be, he proves that it cannot be, since the imagination cannot be imprisoned and the poet goes on to acknowledge, at the end of the poem, that the prison is no prison, and the loss no loss. The syntax, continually finding new stores of energy where it has been affirmed that no more is to be found (the sentence, once the main verb has been introduced, seems ready to draw to a close), mimes, acts out in its own developing structure, the development of feeling behind it.

Syntax-as-music is like subjective syntax: it pleases "by the fidelity with which it follows a 'form of thought' through the poet's mind *but without defining that thought*" (Davie's italics).

In a chapter of *Articulate Energy*, Davie takes into consideration Susanne K. Langer's *Philosophy in a New Key*. He was impressed by the book, and by Sir Herbert Read's claims for it. He quoted Langer's

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judgment that "what music can actually reflect is only the morphology of feeling": hence some sad and some happy conditions "may have a very similar morphology." Langer continues, in the chapter "On Significance in Music":

> Music at its highest, though clearly a symbolic form, is an unconsummated symbol. Articulation is its life, but not assertion; expressiveness, not expression. The actual function of meaning, which calls for permanent contents, is not fulfilled; for the *assignment* of one rather than another possible meaning to each form is never explicitly made.

Davie remarks that in poetry it is not so easy as it is in music "to articulate without asserting; to talk without saying what one is talking about":

> But, as is well known, this difficulty was circumvented by the use of the objective correlative, the invention of a fable or an "unreal" landscape, or the arrangement of images, not for their own sakes, but to stand as a correlative for the experience that is thus the true subject of a poem in which it is never named. It is true that Mr. Eliot, who put the expression "objective correlative" into currency, speaks as if the function of the correlative is to define, better than by naming, the experience, the feeling, for which it stands. But in the light of Mrs. Langer's distinction, we have to say that it defines the morphology of the feeling, not its distinctive nature.

I recall arguing this passage with Davie. It seemed to me that he had got both Langer and Eliot wrong. Morphology is the branch of biology that deals with the form and structure of organisms without consideration of their function. Davie misinterprets Langer: he thinks she said that all symphonies are the same. She didn't; she said that a symphony doesn't mime or trace the lineaments of a particular feeling, but articulates its structure. One structure differs from another just as much as one feeling differs from another: morphology is the level of consideration on which the difference is registered. There is no merit in trying to distinguish "the morphology of the feeling" from "its distinctive nature." Its distinctive nature is recognized in its morphology. For similar reasons, Davie writes as if one of Eliot's poems must be the same as another. But Eliot's theory of the objective correlative doesn't entail this: "The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an "objective

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correlative"; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked." A set of objects, a situation, a chain of events isn't the same as Davie's "a fable or an 'unreal' landscape, or the arrangement of images." I take Eliot's "formula of that *particular* emotion" to coincide with Langer's "morphology." I wish I knew more securely what Eliot means by "which must terminate in sensory experience." Presumably he has in mind a reader's experience or an audience's: the chain of events must come home in the form of sensory experience—not merely in the belatedness of discursive or conceptual terms—to anyone who pays attention. In the essay on *Hamlet* and again in the one on Tourneur, Eliot is trying to find a relatively impersonal way of saying that a particular emotion should not be allowed to exceed the situation that provoked it. The idea he arrives at is a triangular one. Instead of trying to express the emotion directly and at once, a poet or a dramatist should turn aside from it and imagine "a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events" and so forth:

> The cynicism, the loathing and disgust of humanity, expressed consummately in *The Revenger's Tragedy*, are immature in the respect that they exceed the object. Their objective equivalents are characters practising the grossest vices; characters which seem merely to be spectres projected from the poet's inner world of nightmare, some horror beyond words.

Not that Tourneur shouldn't have written *The Revenger's Tragedy* as he did. The play is "a document on humanity chiefly because it is a document on one human being, Tourneur; its motive is truly the death motive, for it is the loathing and horror of life itself." Further: "To have realized this motive so well is a triumph; for the hatred of life is an important phase—even, if you like, a mystical experience—in life itself." But the triumph is consistent with Tourneur's immaturity, his failure to submit his feelings to the discipline by which their morphology might be registered. Morphology is the higher perspective in which a feeling, desire, or passion is understood. Tourneur did not put himself to the ethical labor of understanding his feelings; he sought only to express them.

Davie chose, as an example of syntax-as-music, the first lines of "Gerontion":

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> Here I am, an old man in a dry month,
> Being read to by a boy, waiting for rain.
> I was neither at the hot gates
> Nor fought in the warm rain
> Nor knee deep in the salt marsh, heaving a cutlass,
> Bitten by flies, fought.

"In terms of the prose-sense of this passage," as Davie says, there is no need for the second "fought":

> The word, coming where it does, has the further effect of acting out through syntax the dwindling and the diminution, the guttering frustration and waste, which is the arc of feeling here being presented. The verb, energetic in meaning, and in the active voice, is held up by the three phrases ("knee deep in the salt marsh, heaving a cutlass, bitten by flies"), and this postponing of the issue builds up a tension which the verb would, in the ordinary way, resolve with all the more vigorous *éclat*, in a powerful reverberation. But this it cannot do, having been negated from the first by that "nor" from which it is now so far removed. Hence it has the effect almost of parody, of a shrill and cracked vehemence.

But if Gerontion is an imagined character, personage, or persona, rather than T. S. Eliot, the syntax of the passage becomes "dramatic" rather than "subjective" and should escape Davie's interrogation. "Poetic syntax is *dramatic*," he says, "when its function is to please us by the fidelity with which it follows the 'form of thought' in some mind other than the poet's, which the poet imagines."

The second example of syntax-as-music that Davie quotes in *Articulate Energy* is the opening passage of "Ash-Wednesday":

> Because I do not hope to turn again
> Because I do not hope
> Because I do not hope to turn
> Desiring this man's gift and that man's scope
> I no longer strive to strive towards such things
> (Why should the agèd eagle stretch its wings?)
> Why should I mourn
> The vanished power of the usual reign?
>
> Because I do not hope to know again
> The infirm glory of the positive hour

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Because I do not think
Because I know I shall not know
The one veritable transitory power
Because I cannot drink
There, where trees flower, and springs flow, for there is nothing again

Davie hadn't much to say about that passage, except to mark how elaborately the lines are interwoven by end-rhymes and by similarities of grammar and syntax. Syntax works like rhyme to establish a further relation of likeness. For once, Davie isn't explicit, but he seems to think that an interweaving as pronounced as this is like music because it keeps all the relations within the passage, it doesn't let any force of reference escape from the lines to a world outside. He didn't make anything of the displacement of attention, in the poem, from nouns to conjunctions—"because," "although"; from main to subordinate clauses; the postponement of main verbs—"strive to strive"; the proliferation of present participles—"twisting," "turning," "drivelling," "restoring"; or the motif of "between" in the fourth part.

Davie's brief comment wasn't much help to me in reading "Ash-Wednesday," and as I was a young man seeking all the help I could get, I looked abroad and found it in I. A. Richards, F. R. Leavis, and Eliot himself. Kenner's *The Invisible Poet* had not yet been published.

V.

RICHARDS MUCH ADMIRED "Ash-Wednesday" and thought it "better poetry than even the best sections of *The Waste Land*." His reason for this high valuation was that "Ash-Wednesday" shows "still less 'dread of the unknown depths'" than *The Waste Land* does. Richards had in mind, and quoted, the passage in *Lord Jim* about the wisdom of submitting oneself to the sea, the destructive element. In *Coleridge on Imagination* he has two pages on "Ash-Wednesday," mainly concerned with the process of reading the poem and avoiding the distraction of settling for a conceptual meaning. He didn't believe that the meaning of a poem was a statement to be formulated at the end or in addition to the experience of reading it. The meaning and the experience are one and the same. Richards urged on the reader "a receptive submission, which will perhaps be *reflected* in conjectures but into which inferences among these conjectures do not enter." His attitude was much the same as Eliot's, in the Preface to his translation of St.-John Perse's *Anabase*: there

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is "a logic of the imagination as well as a logic of concepts." Any obscurity in *Anabase* "is due to the suppression of 'links in the chain,' of explanatory and connecting matter, and not to incoherence, or to the love of cryptogram." Further:

> The justification of such abbreviation of method is that the sequence of images coincides and concentrates into one intense impression of barbaric civilization. The reader has to allow the images to fall into his memory successively without questioning the reasonableness of each at the moment; so that, at the end, a total effect is produced.

Not that the sequence in *Anabase* is entirely one of images: it includes exclamations and rhetorical flourishes:

> Fais choix d'un grand chapeau dont on séduit le bord. L'oeil recule d'un siècle aux provinces de l'âme. Par la porte de craie vive on voit les choses de la plaine: choses vivantes.

But the sequence ought to be received—this is Eliot's point—as if it were a sequence of images, each of them unquestionable and unquestioned.

Richards illustrated his way of reading "Ash-Wednesday" by noting the differences between the opening lines of the first and the last sections of the poem:

> "Because I do not hope to turn again" and "Although I do not hope to turn again," in their joint context and their coterminous sub-contexts, will come into full being for very few readers without movements of exploration and resultant ponderings that I should not care to attempt to reflect in even the most distant prose translation. And yet these very movements—untrackable as they perhaps are, and uninducible as they almost certainly are by any other words—are the very life of the poem. In these searchings for meanings of a certain sort its being consists. The poem is a quest, and its virtue is not in anything said by it, or in the way in which it is said, or in a meaning which is found, or even in what is passed by in the search. For in this poem—to quote two lines from Coleridge's "Constancy to an Ideal Object" which is a meditation on the same theme—as in so much of the later poetry of Mr. Yeats, "like strangers shelt'ring from a storm, / Hope and Despair meet in the porch of Death!" And though from their encounter comes

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> "Strength beyond hope or despair / Climbing the third stair" there is no account, in other terms than those of poetry, to be given of how it comes.

I found Richards's reference to "Constancy to an Ideal Object" helpful, not because it named a theme the poem shares with "Ash-Wednesday"—Hope and Despair meeting in the porch of Death—but because Coleridge equivocates between saying that the ideal object is identical with the beloved woman and that it is not. In the end, trying to answer the question—is the Ideal Object nothing?—he shifts the terms altogether to an objective correlative:

> And art thou nothing? Such thou art, as when
> The woodman winding westward up the glen
> At wintry dawn, where o'er the sheep-track's maze
> The viewless snow-mist weaves a glist'ning haze,
> Sees full before him, gliding without tread,
> An image with a glory round its head;
> The enamoured rustic worships its fair hues,
> Nor knows he makes the shadow, he pursues!

Coleridge says much the same as Wordsworth in "Tintern Abbey"—"both what we half-create and what perceive"—but he looks on the gloomy side of it. In "Dejection" he allows for the brighter side—"O lady we receive but what we give." The speaker in "Ash-Wednesday" is not an enamoured rustic, but he rejoices, "having to construct something / Upon which to rejoice." He knows he has to make the shadow he pursues.

Leavis thought well of "Ash-Wednesday" for different reasons than Richards. The poet was preoccupied, he said, with the problem of sincerity:

> He had to achieve a paradoxical precision-in-vagueness; to persuade the elusive intuition to define itself, without any forcing, among the equivocations of "the dreamcrossed twilight." The warning against crude interpretation, against trying to elicit anything in the nature of prose statement, is there in the unexpected absences of punctuation; and in the repetitive effects, which suggest a kind of delicate tentativeness. The poetry itself is an effort at resolving diverse impulsions, recognitions, and needs.

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The ironical function in the self-dramatization of the opening lines I have quoted is, Leavis says, "an insurance against the pride of humility; a self-admonition against the subtle treasons, the refinements, of egotism that beset the quest of sincerity in these regions." The characteristic rhythm of "Ash-Wednesday" has "certain qualities of ritual; it produces in a high degree the frame-effect, establishing apart from the world a special order of experience, dedicated to spiritual exercises."

VI.

THAT LAST EMPHASIS was what I needed. "Ash-Wednesday" is in a sense out of this common world, as if it were written within parentheses or seen under glass, but it refuses merely to dissociate itself from the world. Davie was wrong about the poem: its main impulse is to commit itself to the reality it contemplates, without disowning the sensuous memories and desires that officially count as obstacles. Eliot must do what he ascribes to Lancelot Andrewes rather than to the somewhat vulgar Donne:

> Andrewes's emotion is purely contemplative; it is not personal, it is wholly evoked by the object of contemplation, to which it is adequate; his emotion is wholly contained in and explained by its object. . . .Donne is a "personality" in a sense in which Andrewes is not: his sermons, one feels, are a "means of self-expression." He is constantly finding an object which shall be adequate to his feelings; Andrewes is wholly absorbed in the object and therefore responds with the adequate emotion. Andrewes has the *goût pour la vie spirituelle*, which is not native to Donne.

The question of rhythm, to which Leavis referred, called for further thought: it raised the issue of distance. In Eliot's poems the experiences invoked are presented not immediately or directly but as if in a later light, a higher perspective, or subject to a final cause. He must bear in mind that they might have to be renounced in favor of larger, more spiritually exacting considerations. The actual pleasure persists only because it can't in good faith be denied. The solution is to present movements of desire as if they were embodied in a ballet or transformed into a piece of music. In "The Music of Poetry" Eliot says:

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> I believe that the properties in which music concerns the poet most nearly, are the sense of rhythm and the sense of structure. I think that it might be possible for a poet to work too closely to musical analogies: the result might be an effect of artificiality; but I know that a poem, or a passage of a poem, may tend to realize itself first as a particular rhythm before it reaches expression in words, and that this rhythm may bring to birth the idea and the image; and I do not believe that this is an experience peculiar to myself. The use of recurrent themes is as natural to poetry as to music. There are possibilities for verse which bear some analogy to the development of a theme by different groups of instruments; there are possibilities of transitions in a poem comparable to the different movements of a symphony or a quartet; there are possibilities of contrapuntal arrangement of subject-matter. It is in the concert room, rather than in the opera house, that the germ of a poem may be quickened. More than this I cannot say.

It is well documented that many of Eliot's poems began as hardly more than a fragment of rhythm, perhaps not as fully present as a Wagnerian leitmotif, which he felt impelled to enact if only in a few arbitrary words. Several of these fragments would stay in that condition for months, perhaps years, but gradually a few new words would suggest themselves as companions for the words in place. More gradually still, a structure would suggest itself in which some if not all of the fragments would cohere: not a jigsaw puzzle but a work of gaps and transitions, articulations and silences, repetitions, reconsiderations. The movement of the poem would not aspire to a conclusion, as at the end of a play, but to the resolution of tensions, alert to further tensions always in the vicinity. In "Ash-Wednesday" a difficult sincerity is achieved by grace of musical relations, dissonances and harmonies.

But the music is not the kind that waits to be fulfilled, as a libretto waits on the composer. In "Thinking in Verse" Eliot distinguished two kinds of "music" in verse:

> One is that of the lyrics of Shakespeare or Campion, which *demand* the kindred music of the lute or other instrument; a few songs of Shelley's, such as "Music, when soft voices die," and many songs of Burns and Heine make the same demand. . . . Donne's is the second kind of musical verse: the verse which suggests music, but which, so to speak, contains in itself all its possible music; for if set to music, the play of ideas could not be followed. His poems are poems to be read aloud, *not* sung.

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So also with "Ash-Wednesday," which contains in itself all its possible music and would not gain by receiving the attentions of a composer.

VII.

"ASH-WEDNESDAY" WAS PUBLISHED in London on April 24, 1930 and in the U.S. the following September. Three of its six sections had already been published as separate poems with titles pointing to Dante and Cavalcanti. The first section was published in the spring of 1928 as "Perch 'io Non Spero," the first words of a ballade by Cavalcanti: the second appeared in December 1927 as "Salutation," probably a reference to *La Vita Nuova*, iii, where the poet is greeted by the Lady "with a salutation of such virtue that I thought then to see the world of blessedness." The third section was published in the autumn of 1929 as "Som de L'escalina," the words addressed to Dante as he climbs the third part of the stairway on the Mount of Purgatory, at the top of which is the Garden of Eden. Then Eliot evidently sensed, as he did after the publication of "Burnt Norton," that musical analogies would make it possible for him to take the three sections as movements of a poem of larger range by adding three further cognate sections. Eliot sent Leonard Woolf a typescript of the poem which at that point had five sections, each with a title from Dante or Cavalcanti. B. C. Southam's note gives the available information:

> Sections I and III carried the titles they bore as separate poems. Section II had a different title—"Jausen lo Jorn"—a phrase spoken by Arnaut Daniel in the same speech from which Eliot had taken the title for Section III; it is italicized here: "And I see *with joy the day* for which I hope, before me." (Eliot could have seen the words "jauzen lo jorn" in Pound's "Elizabethan Classicists," *The Egoist*, November 1917). This change of title suggests that Eliot wanted to draw attention to the purgatorial aspect of the section. Section IV was headed "Vestita di Color di Fiamma" ("clad in the colour of flame"), a phrase which occurs in the description of Beatrice (*Purgatorio* xxx, 33) at the Divine Pageant. This helps to identify the spiritual nature of the Lady in Eliot's poem and suggests the basis for the details in line 140. Section V was entitled "La Sua Volontade" ("His Will"), taken from the line "la sua volontade e nostra pace" ("his will is our peace") (*Paradiso* iii, 85). . . .Why Eliot decided to strip the poem of these titles is an open question. He may have felt that the specific reference of these quotation-titles

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was limiting and that the sequence would be better understood without the Dantean reminders.

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent in the Christian calendar; it marks a period of prayer, fasting, and penance—"dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return"—that ends with Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday. The Lenten weeks are a period of atonement, mindful of the forty days and nights that Christ spent in the desert. It is also the period during which, as I recall from my early years in Warrenpoint and Dublin, we Roman Catholics are under obligation to make a good Confession—that adjective having on the lips of my teachers, Christian Brothers, nearly as much emphasis as the sacramental noun—in preparation for the taking of Holy Communion: "Bless me father."

In this context, and with Leavis's commentary close by, there is no merit in trying to name the germ, the embryo, from which "Ash-Wednesday" or any of its constituent poems emerged. Eliot went out of his way to articulate the rhythm without asserting anything. The best he could hope for might be, in words from "Little Gidding," to arrive where he started "and know the place for the first time." The first impulse, the rhythm or germ, is his private business and must remain so. But I'll risk the indelicacy of saying this. Suppose a man, recently converted to Christianity, wished on Ash-Wednesday to join with his fellow Christians in the ceremonies of Lent. Suppose, too, that he felt a scrupulous hesitation, however vague or diffused: there is the fear of duplicity, of false humility, of appearing to deny the world in ways he can't bring himself to. He might find himself separating body and soul to a degree merely officious. I assume that when Eliot spoke of the rhythm or the germ, he meant what F. H. Bradley meant by "feeling," the first inner stir, which is felt long before it has reached any of the stages we call an emotion or an idea. From the moment of "firstness" it begins to nudge itself toward articulation, however rudimentary. In Eliot's case, a few arbitrary words, long before the orders of grammar or syntax came into play, seem to have encouraged development. The ethical correlative of this stirring, I imagine, is the possibility of achieving difficult sincerity, so that the soul may take part in the rituals and sacraments of the Christian community in good faith.

Appropriately, then, Eliot's poem resorts to three fields of diction: (1) religious texts: the Old and New Testaments, rituals of Catholic devotion, sermons of Lancelot Andrewes, the litany of the Blessed Virgin, the "Hail Mary," and especially the Reproaches ("Improperia") of Good Friday—"Ash-Wednesday" is in communion with Herbert's "The Sacrifice" and with

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Pascal ("Teach us to sit still"); (2) texts from European literature, especially Dante, Cavalcanti, and Shakespeare; and (3) the common worldly language of reference and appreciation, but inclined toward generalization and away from specification or singularity—"the vanished power of the usual reign." The speaker is free to resort to any of these three for critique, irony, or acknowledgment.

The poem is a dramatic monologue, but not in Browning's manner. Eliot's implied speaker is a figure placed between being and absence, "between dying and birth," more than a wraith but less than a person, a voice to which we are discouraged from attaching further bodily attributes. We can't even be sure that he's old, despite "Why should the agèd eagle stretch his wings?" The voice may be entirely textual, an emanation from the English language in the Christian and Latin phase of its history. As in an examination of conscience, the speaker is not working toward a spiritual conclusion: ideally, there is no end to such an analysis, least of all the felicity of having reached a self-edifying conclusion. But the examination differs in this respect from the one prescribed by the Christian Church for its members: to achieve difficult sincerity, the speaker can't be content to divide himself into body and soul and deny the body's appeal. He must act justly toward the world, body, desire, and time; not only toward God, the Church, spirit, soul, and eternity. He is in the confessional, speaking to a priest in darkness:

> Wavering between the profit and the loss
> In this brief transit where the dreams cross
> The dreamcrossed twilight between birth and dying
> (Bless me father) though I do not wish to wish these things
> From the wide window towards the granite shore
> The white sails still fly seaward, seaward flying
> Unbroken wings
>
> And the lost heart stiffens and rejoices
> In the lost lilac and the lost sea voices
> And the weak spirit quickens to rebel
> For the bent golden-rod and the lost sea smell
> Quickens to recover
> The cry of quail and the whirling plover
> And the blind eye creates
> The empty forms between the ivory gates
> And smell renews the salt savour of the sandy earth

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According to Northrop Frye, the dreams are "the dreams of waking consciousness, memory, and dream proper, all of them animated by desire, all of them having no end but death." Well, yes, I suppose so; but in the dark of the confessional the speaker must tell as much truth as he knows and can bring himself to say, including the secular truth of pleasure and memory. The clause "though I do not wish to wish these things" indicates that the things must be irresistible if they survive the discouragement of the repeated verbs: it is far more difficult to rid oneself of those never-to-be-forgotten pleasures than the gift and scope disavowed in the first section by another doubled verb—"I no longer strive to strive towards such things." And so it should be, else the spiritual voiding achieved in the Confessional is spurious. It is the compelling quality of the sensory experiences, forcing themselves upon the penitent's examination of conscience and being acknowledged there, that makes "Ash-Wednesday" a telling as well as a confessing poem. The poem ends, as it should, with the prayer: "And let my cry come unto Thee." But in the meantime there are the cries of other occasions, as in "The white sails still fly seaward, seaward flying." Davie might find this last phrase unnecessary, and it would be if semantics were king, but here the perception turning back upon itself becomes a caress of acknowledgment and exhilaration, with energy propelled from "towards" in the previous line: "From the wide window towards the granite shore." A similar gesture in the third poem gives us "Blown hair is sweet, brown hair over the mouth blown," and in the fourth poem "White light folded, sheathed about her, folded." The certitude of the cadence in these lines is an acknowledgment of values the penitent is not obliged to renounce, unless renunciation must be so drastic as to include life itself.

The three dictions I have isolated work, in the poem, to achieve a critical perspective beyond any one of them, just as a symphony or a string quartet as an achieved form is beyond the workings of the individual instruments it accommodates. The perspective can hardly be called anything but Language, a force of expressiveness prior to any particular expression it allows. Reading "Ash-Wednesday," we need to have such an abstraction in mind, if only to account for the distinctive style that exerts critical pressure upon the intimations of worldly gratification in the passages I have quoted. It is the style that, more than any other factor, makes it possible to think of "Ash-Wednesday" as the redemption of *The Waste Land* and "The Hollow Men." How to describe it? It is as if the first two dictions—the liturgical and the literary—were combined in one, and in that guise stood aside from the worldly pleasures, not to shame them but to submit them to more exacting discriminations. The

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style I refer to is judicial, hieratic, responsive to the sundry of the world but free of its blandishments:

> The silent sister veiled in white and blue
> Between the yews, behind the garden god,
> Whose flute is breathless, bent her head and signed but spoke no word
>
> But the fountain sprang up and the bird sang down
> Redeem the time, redeem the dream
> The token of the word unheard, unspoken
>
> Till the wind shake a thousand whispers from the yew
>
> And after this our exile

The tone of this passage corresponds to absolution. If the poem is an examination of conscience leading to a good Confession, absolution can only take the form of a distinctively poised presence within language itself.

VIII.

I MAY BE ABLE to clarify this by quoting a passage from Valéry's "La Pythie" and a comment on it by Elizabeth Sewell:

> Honneur des hommes, Saint LANGAGE,
> Discours prophétique et paré,
> Belles chaînes en qui s'engage
> Le dieu dans la chair égaré,
> Illumination, largesse!
> Voici parler une Sagesse
> Et sonner cette auguste Voix
> Qui se connaît quand elle sonne
> N'être plus la voix de personne
> Tant que des ondes et des bois!

We are to imagine Language, an abstraction to begin with, become a god in the flesh. Sewell translates the lines into prose:

> Honour of men, sainted LANGUAGE, discourse prophetic and adorned, fair chains in which the god lost in the flesh is content to

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> be taken, illuminations, bounty! There speaks a Wisdom, here sounds that august voice which, when it sounds, knows itself to be not more the voice of a person than that of the waters and the woods.

In her commentary, Sewell says:

> At first sight it seems almost an irrelevance; but when one looks into it, it is clearly the only answer Valéry could give—though not perhaps the only one that could be given. Words are the mind's one defence against possession by thought or dreams; even Jacob kept trying to find out the name of the angel he wrestled with. Words made into poetry, the prophetic ornamented discourse, carefully chained lest too much freedom should let in the powers of darkness—these will effect such resolution as can be achieved between the logical and the irrational functions of the mind. . . .But apart from this, see how curiously this verse runs: there is the word, sanctified, a god in the flesh, the true light and glory, coming into the world—it is impossible to set it down like that and not be instantly reminded of the opening of St. John's Gospel. . . .This time it is "Au commencement était le verbe," in the beginning was the word, and it is Valéry quoting it and saying "But the word is nothing else than one of the most precise names for that which I have called mind" (*esprit*). Mind and word are almost synonymous in a great many uses.

Words and mind, synonymous: it is a bias congenial not only to Valéry but to Eliot. I think Eliot allowed words a slight degree of priority and therefore of privilege before assenting to a relation amounting on the happiest occasions to identity. Lost in the flesh, he is content to be taken in the chains of language; or if not content—since he often complains that the words are not right or not sufficient—he can't think of any other chains in which to be held. His poems let the ordinary world in only because, language being discursive, it can't be kept out. Leavis's phrasing—"establishing apart from the world a special order of experience, dedicated to spiritual exercises"—applies to nearly all of Eliot's poems, not only to "Ash-Wednesday." This prejudice of Eliot's sensibility did not satisfy the Poundian Davie: he wanted to think of the self in anyone as a distinct configuration of energies, not entirely verbal; then of language as an instrument, a means, and in that respect as a gift of God; and likewise of the world, external, palpable, sounding and shining.

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IX.

I QUOTE THE OPENING of the second poem:

> Lady, three white leopards sat under a juniper tree
> In the cool of the day, having fed to satiety
> On my legs my heart my liver and that which had been contained
> In the hollow round of my skull. And God said
> Shall these bones live? shall these
> Bones live? And that which had been contained
> In the bones (which were already dry) said chirping:
> Because of the goodness of this Lady
> And because of her loveliness, and because
> She honours the Virgin in meditation,
> We shine with brightness. And I who am here dissembled
> Proffer my deeds to oblivion, and my love
> To the posterity of the desert and the fruit of the gourd.
> It is this which recovers
> My guts the strings of my eyes and the indigestible portions
> Which the leopards reject. The Lady is withdrawn
> In a white gown, to contemplation, in a white gown.

Exegesis is not required, though it may be supplied by reference to the *Purgatorio*, Grimm's fairy-tales "The Juniper" and "The Singing Bone," the Book of Ezekiel, and other sources. These allusions have force—to cite R. P. Blackmur—as "a constant reminder of the presence of the barbaric, of other and partial creations within our own creation." But we may have the reminder without the sources. Taken as it stands, the passage is like a tapestry of strangely imperturbable presences or a painting by Delvaux. Kenner describes it as "dreamily static like an invention of the Douanier Rousseau's." The lines have patience enough for local precisions—"the bones (which were already dry)"—but they don't find further singularities necessary. Two lines have between them "because" three times, rehearsing a motif from the opening poem: "Because I do not hope to turn." The verbs stand remote from immediacy: "dissembled," "proffer," "recovers," "withdrawn." It is poetry-as-music in Davie's sense, because it pleases by the fidelity with which it follows a "form of thought" through the speaker's mind but without defining that thought. What we meet is a mind saying things, the saying and the thinking being identical: it is a mind thinking rather than thoughts being uttered. The poetry is also poetry-as-music in Langer's sense, because

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the assignment of one rather than another possible meaning to each constituent is not explicitly made. Opacity is not in question; we move without hesitation or distress from one indeterminacy to the next, not stopping to ask what precisely the posterity of the desert is or the fruit of the gourd. But the passage is not mellifluous, nor does it make undue concessions to the Christian readers it may be supposed mainly to address. Anglican *einfühlung* is not appealed to. The propriety of the passage is in the cadence, the distinctive movement of a mind conscious of itself and conscious, too, of its obligation to the Lady, the Beatrice-figure, and of the Virgin to be approached indirectly through the Lady who honours her in meditation.

X.

NOT SURPRISINGLY, the attribute of Eliot's work that Davie regarded as most reprehensible was its susceptibility to incantation and the "auditory imagination." We avoided quarreling about it only because I couldn't think of any arguments that would persuade him. He was exasperated by this part of the ninth chorus from *The Rock*:

> Out of the sea of sound the life of music,
> Out of the slimy mud of words, out of the sleet and hail of verbal
> imprecisions,
> Approximate thoughts and feelings, words that have taken the place
> of thoughts and feelings,
> There spring the perfect order of speech, and the beauty of
> incantation.

Davie thought it a scandal that lines that recognized the evil of verbal imprecisions and approximations should end by recommending the beauty of incantation. He hated talk of verbal magic or Pure Poetry. So he was appalled to find Eliot appearing to take Poe's poetry seriously and letting it get away with a cult of pure sound. It has the effect, Eliot said in "From Poe to Valéry," of "an incantation which, because of its very crudity, stirs the feelings at a deep and almost primitive level." Almost primitive, maybe; but "deep" and "because of its very crudity"? Surely not. Any mind that recognizes the crudity is immune to Poe's magic. Eliot went on to insist that "in even the most purely incantatory poem, the dictionary meaning of words cannot be disregarded with impunity," but Davie thought the harm was already done. It is true that

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in the remainder of "From Poe to Valéry" Eliot gave a damaging account of Poe's poetry and his theory of poetic composition: the only merit Poe had, apparently, was that he somehow inspired Baudelaire, Mallarmé, and Valéry, and permitted Valéry to regard the act of composition as more interesting than the poem that results from it.

On the question of the auditory imagination, I never tried to clarify my position with Davie. Many of the poems I most cared for were products of that imagination, and were intimate with verbal magic, the caress of syllables, the echoes and recesses of words. Now that it's too late, I'll try to put together a few considerations that might have modified his impatience. I could have quoted this passage from Eliot's "Note sur Mallarmé et Poe":

> Chez Poe et Mallarmé la philosophie est en partie remplacée par un élément d'*incantation*. Dans "Ulalume" par exemple, et dans "Un Coup de Dés," cette incantation, qui insiste sur la puissance primitive du Mot (Fatum), est manifeste. En ce sens le vers de Mallarmé, qui s'applique si bien à lui-même, constitue une brillante critique de Poe: *donner un sens plus pur aux mots de la tribu*. L'effort pour restituer la puissance du Mot, qui inspire la syntaxe de l'un et de l'autre et leur fait écarter le sonore pur ou le pur mélodieux (qu'ils pourraient, tous les deux, s'ils le voulaient, si bien exploiter), cet effort, qui empêche le lecteur d'*avaler d'un coup* leur phrase ou leur vers, est une des qualités qui rapprochent le mieux les deux poètes. Il y a aussi la fermeté de leur pas lorsqu'ils passent du monde tangible au monde des fantômes.

But I'm not sure that Davie would have been open to persuasion on the primitive power of the Word, even with the addition of the parenthetical Fatum. Eliot evidently had in mind the Word in an entirely secular sense, not the Word of God as it was to be invoked three years later in "Ash-Wednesday." What else can that be but verbal magic, the resources of charms and runes? The firmness of step with which Poe and Mallarmé moved from the tangible world to the world of phantoms is an odd assertion, unless Eliot has in view the abeyance of will, a poet's trust—short of confidence or certitude—in the power of language rather than the power of the self. Or a poet's conviction that language is the most reliable source of authority, because the most impersonal. When he became an Anglican, Eliot construed the Word in its religious sense, and resorted to it as prayer, ritual and liturgical observance, all the more vital for its traditional and sacramental repetition. But he did

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not abandon his sense of the power of the Word even in its secular manifestations. Presumably he felt no contradiction between the Word in both its secular and its religious senses.

I continue to wonder why Davie did not include "Ash-Wednesday" in the *New Oxford Book of Christian Verse*.

XI.

I SHOULD HAVE ARGUED about "Ash-Wednesday" with another friend I greatly admired and admire, Frank Kermode, but I was distracted by his commentary on Yeats in *Romantic Image*. It seemed to me that his description of the dancer in Yeats's plays and poems was too narrowly Symbolist, predicated entirely on Jane Avril and Loie Fuller. In the dance-plays, I wanted to think of Martha Graham and to acknowledge the earthiness of Yeats's dancer rather than the ethereality, the Liberty silks and chiffons. But I should have paid more attention to the last pages of *Romantic Image*, where Kermode says that he could have put Eliot rather than Yeats at the center of the book—

> and some points might have been more forcibly made by a discussion of the disposition of symbols in a work like "Ash-Wednesday": if the whole work is an image, how is it, to paraphrase Mrs. Langer, "articulated"? But Eliot's relationship with discourse is less easy than that of Yeats. The problem is the same, and it is magnificently solved: it is the problem of giving symbolic value to the "sense", of identifying dancer and dance. But "Ash-Wednesday" is, so to say, verbless, making no propositions and openly defying the intellect (though, not being illiterate, we all try to explicate what is by definition inexplicable). It is an arrangement of images, or an articulated image, requiring to be looked at "spatially". At the linguistic level Mr. Eliot has that precision of strange outline that all Symbolists require; nothing is more memorable in his verse than the immediate sense of exactness communicated, the impression of great resources of language delicately employed, and infinite flexibility of rhythm. And all this conveys the vitality of the Image, the movement in stillness and the life in death, without Yeats's concessions to the reader less privileged. Mallarmé would doubtless have been better pleased.

Doubtless; but Kermode's attempt to associate "Ash-Wednesday" with "the Image" should be resisted. It is true that the poem is, "so to say,

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verbless," and that it postpones main verbs by brooding on conjunctions, prepositions, and participles—"because" and "although," "between," "if," "against," "about," "restoring," "wavering," "flying," and more. But it is not true that the poem is one image, or that the Lady is yet another version of Kermode's romantic Image, sister to Keats's Moneta, "bright-blanch'd / By an immortal sickness which kills not." The origins of the romantic Image are in Pater's Monna Lisa, *Marius the Epicurean*, and "Emerald Uthwart"; Symons's "Ballet, Pantomime and Poetic Drama"; Rossetti's Lilith; and the Salomes of Maeterlinck, Flaubert, Moreau, Wilde, and Yeats. But the Lady in "Ash-Wednesday," withdrawn to contemplation as she is, is not, like Rossetti's Lilith, "subtly of herself contemplative." She "honours the Virgin in meditation." It would be vulgar to say of her, as Kermode justly says of Lilith, that "it is the Image, unimpassioned, wise in its whole body, that attracts unbounded passion." Between the Lady and the Virgin, and surrounding them, there are Christianity, the Church, the sacraments, and the laity, faithful and sinful: we are not merely observing "the Image," occult, self-possessed; "some Herodiade," as Yeats wrote in one of his Symbolist moments, "dancing seemingly alone in her narrow moving luminous circle."

In fact, Davie was closer to being right about Eliot than Kermode is. The proper analogy is indeed with music, not with sculpture or the image. We should also hold to Susanne Langer's presentation of music as virtual time, a mode of being, offered only to be perceived and not otherwise to be lived in. More than Yeats, more than any other modern poet with the possible exception of Mallarmé, Eliot observes the procedures of a composer, and his words are discursive only so far as, being words with diverse histories and obligations, they can't avoid being discursive. They would exist as pure sound if they could.

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WALTER LAQUEUR

Recollections of Talbiyeh

WHEN I FIRST CAME to Jerusalem before the Second World War, Talbiyeh was one of the most attractive parts of town—and therefore altogether out of reach for impecunious newcomers. But when I returned in 1945 I somehow did manage to live on the borders of the quarter, usually on the wrong side of the tracks. For some time I lived at the corner of Arlozorov and Obadja mi Bartenura (Bertinoro) streets. There is a surfeit of history in Jerusalem and almost every street name is a further historical provocation. Arlozorov was the boy wonder of the Zionist movement in Germany. He was killed in late 1933 at the beach of Tel Aviv in circumstances that have remained a mystery to this day. Had he lived, he might well have become prime minister or foreign minister of Israel. All we know about Bartenura is derived from three letters. He was born in Italy around 1450 but came to Palestine, settling in Jerusalem, where he became the spiritual head of the Jewish community which was so poor that, being a considerable scholar, he also had to act as grave digger. After about a hundred meters this street changes its name and becomes Brenner Street, which shall appear in our narrative later on, for in number 10 the relations of Mr. Edward Said lived. Brenner was an iconoclastic left-wing Hebrew writer and critic who lived in poverty and was killed in Jaffa during the Arab riots of 1921. Mr. Said is also a critic who thinks of himself as an iconoclast; but as far as his profession is concerned, as president of the Modern Language Association, he must certainly be considered very much mainstream and *bien pensant*. However, I shall not be concerned on this occasion with Mr. Said's preoccupation with the postcolonial interpretation of *Jane Eyre* and other literary topics, but with a specific neighborhood in Jerusalem which I knew rather well, and with how the two of us saw it and remembered it.

No one knows the origin of the name *Talbiyeh*. Earlier on it was called Nikoforia after a monk who lived in the vicinity. The quarter was built in the 1920s and 1930s in the area between, roughly, Terra Santa in the south and the Hansen Leper Hospital (founded by Germans in the 1880s when it was probably the only building in that neighborhood). Like many buildings of that period in Jerusalem, it was designed by a German architect named Conrad Schick, whose work can still be seen

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in the Street of the Prophets and thereabouts. Today the (new) Jerusalem theater is the main landmark in the vicinity, but the Israeli president's residence and the Van Leer Institute, which houses the Israeli Academy of Science, also belong to Talbiyeh.

The founders of Talbiyeh were a group of Christian Arabs who bought the land from the Greek Orthodox patriarchate. Talbiyeh consists of comfortable houses (few are more than two or three stories high) in various architectural styles with gardens and massive iron gates, inscriptions in various languages, broad staircases and ornaments, and arches and sunken patios. Above all there were (and are) excellent views of the Old City and towards Bethlehem in the south. Jews acquired land and built houses there from the beginning.

Talbiyeh has not changed very much over the years but for the new buildings; and while the official name is now the Hebrew word "Komemiut," no one uses it, just as the central square of the quarter, officially named Wingate Square, is still called Salame Square. On this square the Hana Salame Building (which now houses the Belgian consulate) is the outstanding site. Salame was a wealthy Christian Arab merchant who made his money mainly by supplying food to the British forces in the Middle East in World War II; his brother Constantine also built there. An interesting exhibition a few years ago (*To Live in Jerusalem* by David Krojanker, the indefatigable historian of Jerusalem architecture) showed an astonishing similarity between the interior of these houses and those of their Jewish neighbors—for instance, the building a few steps away, which belonged to a well-known lawyer of American origin, Shalom Horowitz. The style was European ("international," or Bauhaus, as it was then called) except perhaps that in the Horowitz dining room there were more pictures on the wall. There were also some buildings in the oriental style: one villa called Harun al-Rashid after the *Arabian Nights* could well have been situated in tenth-century Baghdad.

Further down, next to the Horowitz place, lived Harry Viteles, also an American Jew, who had acted for many years as representative of the Joint Distribution Committee in Palestine and who wrote a six-or seven-volume history of cooperation in the country. He was about forty years my senior but we became friends. I visited frequently in his apartment and owe him, among many other things, my first pair of decent trousers, purchased at a time when textiles were expensive and difficult to obtain. They had belonged to Nelson Glück, the archeologist who, having ended his excavations, had left some of his belongings with Harry. They were of seersucker, a material I had never seen before.

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A few steps further down, at 6 Balfour Street, Salman Schocken, the German-Jewish department store magnate, publisher, and book collector, had a very substantial library built in 1935 which contained many exceedingly rare manuscripts. Schocken's home, one of the most impressive in Talbiyeh, was around the corner on a side street (now Smolenskin Street). Schocken had known Erich Mendelssohn, one of the most famous architects of the time, in Germany where Mendelssohn had designed some of the leading Schocken department stores; the one in Stuttgart can be found in most histories of modern architecture. Mendelssohn stayed in Palestine for a few years in the late 1930s, built many private and public houses, and later went to the United States, as Schocken did in his old age.

Mendelssohn loved Talbiyeh and at the southern end of Balfour Street built a windmill, a landmark to this very day, which served as both his office and apartment. He liked the light of Talbiyeh, especially in the late afternoon, which he thought was the light Rembrandt had tried to depict; he even named one of the balconies in the Schocken library "Rembrandt." The Schocken villa was (and probably still is) one of the most expensive buildings in Talbiyeh. Soon after the war it became the headquarters of General Barker, the commander-in-chief of British troops in Palestine, who suggested that one should hit the Palestinian Jews (who caused him much annoyance at the time) where it hurt them most, namely in their pockets. But the pockets of the Palestinian Jews at the time were not deep and Barker's strategy was ineffectual. After the British had left, Salman Schocken tried to sell his villa for two hundred thousand Israeli pounds. The state of Israel wanted it as the official residence of the president, but Izhak Ben Zvi (who succeeded Weizmann, the first president) and his wife found the house too ostentatious and luxurious, not commensurate with their modest lifestyle, and it eventually became the Rubin Academy of Music.

Next to the Schocken villa now is the official residence of the Israeli prime minister. This house was built in 1936-38 by Edward Aghion, a wealthy Greek Jew from Alexandria. Many other prominent Jewish citizens of Jerusalem lived in Talbiyeh, including some of the better-off intellectuals such as Martin Buber, and they often belonged to the league of Arab-Jewish rapprochement then called Ichud. At the time, Ichud published a monthly called *Beayot* (*Problems*) for which I occasionally wrote. As a result I came to know most of the leading members of the group, such as Hugo Bergmann and Ernst Simon, who lived a few hundred yards from Buber. There were no clear borders between Talbiyeh, a mixed neighborhood; Rechavia, which was entirely Jewish; and Katamon,

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which was predominantly Arab. Talbiyeh was a truly international place: the Salames and Bisharas lived next to Armenians such as Matossian and Klabian; the Salameh buildings were designed by Zoltan Hermet, a Hungarian Jewish architect, and the Jasmin House Hotel in Talbiyeh was run by Jasmin Kana'an, an Arab lady whose mother was German. ("Mixed" marriages were not that uncommon in the quarter.) The small Antonio monastery was designed by an Italian and the Constantine Salame villa by a Frenchman. There was a Montserrat Institute belonging to the Spanish, where the Bible was translated into Catalan. There were at least half a dozen consulates in Balfour Street, the main road in Talbiyeh. The Jewish *mukhtar* (headman) of Talbiyeh was the publisher Rubin Maas, an early arrival from Germany. Relations between Jews and Arabs were friendly or at least normal even at times of great tension, such as during the riots of 1936-38, and again in 1946-47. During the war, illustrious exiles from Europe and elsewhere lived in Talbiyeh, including Peter, King of Yugoslavia, and Haile Selassie, the Ethiopian emperor. The Salames had many Jewish business associates and even a few friends, and the same was true for most of the other wealthy Christian Arab families. There was, perhaps, not that much socializing, but there was mutual help. There was also not much tension—except, perhaps, if an Arab landlord wanted to get rid of a Jewish tenant, as happened in the case of the Said family and of Martin Buber. Arabs and Jews went to shop in the same places, often in the German colony in the valley towards the railway station. The Arab grocers gave credit to less affluent Jewish customers (a group to which we belonged). When a member of the Arab families fell ill, chances were that he would consult Professor Hermann Zondek who lived in Ben Maimon Street, between Balfour and Terra Santa, or, if it were a female member of the family, she would go to his brother, Bernhard. Both had patients from all over the Middle East, including some very prominent ones.

Zondek had hesitated over whether he should come to Jerusalem. As he writes in his autobiography, his experiences during his first visit to the city had not been encouraging: when he asked to be shown a hospital, he was shown what he thought was a little synagogue with a dozen elderly men praying. His friends advised him not to emigrate to such a backward country. He did not listen to their advice, but settled in Jerusalem and lived to see the emergence of a modern medical system.

Many more stories could be told about Talbiyeh, but enough has been said to show that it was cosmopolitan and that Jews and Arabs lived there in harmony until the riots broke out in early December of 1947. These, at least, are my recollections, and I was a little surprised when I

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read in Edward Said's recent autobiography *Out of Place: A Memoir* (Alfred A. Knopf, $26.95) that the Talbiyeh and the Jerusalem he remembers, where he stayed in 1947, were quite different.

Mr. Said was a schoolboy then, and I was a young journalist, but we walked the same streets and went to the same cinemas (the Arab Rex and the Jewish Regent). We had to show our special passes when entering the British security zones (which had been established in 1946 after the King David bombing), the German Colony, and some other parts of western Jerusalem. Yet one statement in Mr. Said's memoir puzzles me in particular—his distinct recollection that Talbiyeh and the neighboring districts were exclusively populated by Palestinians. Elsewhere, as well, he writes that Jerusalem, unlike Cairo, had a homogeneous population made up mainly of Palestinians. I have no reason to doubt that these are indeed Mr. Said's recollections; they remind me of the (probably apocryphal) stories about Herzl, who during his visit to Palestine in 1898 managed not to see the Arab inhabitants of the country. I consulted the works of reference: according to the statistics of the British Mandate, in 1947 there lived in Jerusalem 157,000 people, of whom 97,000 were Jews; the rest (60,000) were mainly Arabs but also included many thousands of Greeks and Armenians, as well as monks and nuns from all over the world. There had been in fact a Jewish majority in Jerusalem since the nineteenth century. Yet the Jerusalem that Mr. Said remembers was not at all cosmopolitan, but an almost entirely Arab city. Mr. Said thinks that "our society was destroyed in 1948." If he refers to the presence of the wealthy Christian Arab families in Talbiyeh, then he is right. But if he refers to Arab Jerusalem, he is not, for the number of Arabs living in the city is now three or four times larger than it was in 1947.

The peaceful coexistence of 1947 did come to an end rather suddenly. I well remember the days in December 1947 when Mr. Faraj, my landlord in the German Colony and a sergeant in the local police station, told me that though some of his best friends were Jews, there had to be a war—but that after the war, everything would be fine again. Both assumptions seemed to me doubtful; but upon pressing him concerning the necessity of a war, I did not get a clear answer.

Unfortunately, Sergeant Faraj's fatalistic views prevailed. It started with several probably spontaneous attacks against Jewish buses. In the beginning only stones were thrown. But a few hours later shots were fired. During the days after December 2, several Jewish quarters such as Romema and Mekor Baruch came under fire, and the Jewish residents had to escape. The Shabab (young Arab militants organized in the

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Najada and other groups) burned down and pillaged the Jewish commercial center outside the Old City; many Jewish families lost their livelihood. Close to where I lived, a colleague, an Anglo-Jewish journalist named Stern, was killed. After a few days of murder, arson, and pillage, we too, together with the other Jewish families, had to move out very quickly from the German Colony, leaving some of our belongings behind. It was very difficult to get a van and two porters to help us, as the German Colony was becoming a war zone. It was not an easy time; we had a month-old baby, and had to sleep for weeks on the floors of crowded apartments belonging to friends until we were allocated a three-room apartment which we had to share with two other families.

In recent years, Mr. Said has expressed the opinion that an admission of guilt by the Zionists for what they did to the Palestinians in 1947-48 would be an absolute precondition for reconciliation between the two nations. If this could help the peace process I would be all in favor. On various occasions within the last year, Mr. Barak has in fact expressed regret in the Israeli parliament about the suffering of the Palestinian people, especially the refugees living in miserable conditions. But how could he apologize for the Arab uprising in December 1947 following the U.N. Partition Plan, and the invasion of the Arab armies in 1948 which started it all? Mr. Said might argue that the Palestinian Arabs had no alternative but to take up arms against a plan which they thought threatened their vital national interests. But the recourse to arms is always a risky business, since no one knows how it will end. Hitler launched a war in 1939 and in the end many millions of Germans expelled from Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Prussia, and other places—most of them no doubt innocent of war crimes—had to pay the price.

I have often asked myself what would have happened if the Arab attacks in December 1947 and the months after had not taken place—if the Palestinians had, however reluctantly, accepted the U.N. decision to partition Palestine. Counterfactual history has no certainties, but chances are that the Palestinians would have been given a state in 1948 and that Jerusalem would have been a *corpus separandum* under international supervision. It seems unthinkable that the Israelis would have, in violation of the U.N. resolution, expanded the territory allotted to them by forcing Palestinians to flee from the territories the Israelis seized. In that case, the Jewish state would never have been recognized when the British left on May 15, 1948. Would a small Jewish state have been viable? Would a Palestinian Arab state have been able to exist? We do not know whether a binational state could have survived, or whether it would have led to conditions similar to those in India in 1947—or in

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Cyprus, Sri Lanka, Northern Ireland, Quebec, Croatia, Bosnia, or wherever else such an experiment took place. All we know for certain is that the Palestinian Arabs were not willing to accept the binational solution either: Palestine was Arab and had to remain Arab, just as Jerusalem was Arab and had to remain Arab. On the basis of these assumptions Mr. Faraj was right, as was Mr. Said, and the tragedy had to take its course.

Finding a solution for the future of Jerusalem is said to be the most difficult part of the peace process, though it has never been quite clear to me why it should be impossible. I have great sympathy with those who demand that the city should never be divided again as it was from 1948 to 1967, even though in reality it has been a divided city for years, despite the absence of walls and barbed wire. As for the ultra-Orthodox among the Jews, many do not recognize the State of Israel, and state borders mean nothing to them as long as they can pray at the Wailing Wall. True, there are the nationalist, quasi-religious fanatics willing to engage in any provocation to regain the Temple Mount and to dominate the whole city. But they are not many, and on the other side the great majority of believing Muslims and Christians would be perfectly satisfied if access to their holy sites were guaranteed.

There is the mythical Zion, and the reality of Jerusalem; and the reality, except for a decade or two, has often been sordid. When I first came to Jerusalem I did not like the city, even though my aesthetic sense was not overdeveloped at the time. By and large it was a dirty, noisy, and dilapidated place, essentially the Turkish provincial town it had been for centuries. The old city was one big bazaar, with hucksters trying to sell their quasi-religious amulets and holy water from the Jordan. Jaffa Street, the main street, was a mixture of Eastern Poland and deepest Anatolia. Me'a She'arim, where the ultra-Orthodox lived, reminded one of a medieval ghetto; and the Oriental Jewish markets and residential quarters were at best of a fascinating ugliness.

In retrospect, I don't think these were just the prejudices of an arrogant young man from Europe, alienated from the sources of his religion and Jewish traditions. The Zionist leaders, beginning with Herzl, reacted in a similar way. They were appalled by what they saw, and while paying lip service to the place of Jerusalem in Jewish tradition and keeping the political institutions there, they all chose to live in Tel Aviv.

I recently came across letters in a Russian archive written by an ancestor of mine, Aleksandr Borisovich Lakier, who visited Jerusalem in 1859. Although Lakier was Russian Orthodox, his father had been a German Jew; but Lakier carefully hid that fact and established himself in Russian society, becoming the most prominent literary traveler of his

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time. (His impressions of the United States were published a few years ago by the University of Chicago Press in *A Russian Looks at America: The Journey of Aleksandr Borisovich Lakier in 1857*.) But the man who had found something noteworthy and impressive in every place he had ever visited, from the reading room of the British Museum to the campus of Harvard College to the Great Pyramids, had nothing good to say about Jerusalem and preferred to keep his impressions to himself, or confined to comments in his letters to his family.

Jerusalem had the good fortune to have a mayor of genius for about twenty years after 1967; under Teddy Kollek, a great deal was done to clean up the city and beautify it. But since then the city has been going steadily downhill. Demographic trends (the growth of the ultra-Orthodox population) which seem determined to turn Jerusalem into one big ghetto have greatly contributed to this development. At the same time Jerusalem with its narrow lanes has become a giant traffic jam during most hours of the day and some of the night. It is not too much to say that what with the Israeli wanderlust, many Tel Avivians know their way around Paris and London better than they do Jerusalem. Despite all the money invested by the Israeli government, the Israeli element in the city has not increased, and the Arab percentage of the population is slowly growing. In fact, there is a steady Jewish exodus from the city on the part of the secular, mainly because the Orthodox are waging a relentless campaign to remodel the city in their image. And since the Orthodox have six to eight children on average, their political influence is constantly growing. Paradoxically, young Orthodox families are also leaving the city because the rents are too high. And so Jerusalem is again coming down in the world after the great clean-up under Kollek; it is a city for visitors and pilgrims but not (with the exception of a few oases, including Talbiyeh) a particularly enjoyable place to live. And it remains a riddle why this holy city, which is in such an unholy mess, should remain the main bone of contention on the road to peace.

Whether Edward Said has a legal right to that house in Talbiyeh, I do not know. He certainly would have every right to fight for the Palestinian cause even if he had been born in Outer Mongolia and had never even visited Jerusalem or attended school there. In a recent aside, Mr. Barak said that had he been born an Arab, he might well have become a terrorist; this statement caused indignation among some circles in Israel, but it is no more than the truth. Whether an advocate of this cause living in relative luxury and security in New York has the moral right to oppose the Oslo accord and the peace process—to fight, so to speak, to the last Palestinian from a safe distance—is yet another question. Said

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is a moralist and I am sure he has an explanation ready which persuades himself and will satisfy his admirers.

Nor is it that difficult to understand Said's radicalism, which probably has little to do with the deep moral commitment he always invokes and his innate non-conformism, but has instead a great deal to do with Said's Christian origins. He is not a practicing Christian, and is uncomfortable with his non-Arabic first name. The same is true at least to some extent with many of the Georges, Williams, Edmunds, Nicolas, and Michaels—not to mention the Clovis in the forefront of the Arab national movement.

Once upon a time this did not greatly matter, but with the rise of Muslim fundamentalism, the situation of these non-Muslims has become precarious. They are under psychological pressure to show that their patriotism equals that of their Muslim compatriots. As a spokesman for those in Jordan who oppose normal relations with Israel, Ah Abu Sakar said, "I am a Muslim and the Jewish people are our enemy." There was no reference to being an Arab, or to Zionism. One of the Christian Arab leaders solved his own problem by moving to Iraq and converting to Islam, but for those who are known secularists, this may not be a way out of the dilemma. Nor is it a specifically Arab predicament: the Jews in the Russian terrorist movement prior to World War I had to prove their attachment to the cause by being more extreme and more foolhardy than the others. The same is true for the role of women in the Baader Meinhof gang in Germany. Another example is that of Semyon Frank, the Russian philosopher who died an émigré, who reached the conclusion that a full identification with his native country was possible only if he also embraced the state religion, and so he and his family became practicing Russian Orthodox. The same was true of Boris Pasternak; and it would be easy to adduce other examples from other countries.

To blame Said for not having embraced the tenets of Zionism is, of course, ridiculous. His case against Israel is as logical and legitimate as that of the German refugees who were expelled from Eastern Europe after World War II, or those of the many millions of Indians and Pakistanis who had to flee when the subcontinent was divided. What undermines his position are the blatant contradictions in his public posture and, to call a spade a spade, his intellectual dishonesty. If there were a prize for the self-righteous among the nations he would be a leading candidate. Showered with honors, acclaim, and publicity, the avatar of political correctness, considered by some to be the most influential intellectual figure in the United States, he still presents himself as a persecuted

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outsider, a marginal existence, a lonely, persecuted, courageous voice in the wilderness. Said's polemical style is shrill, *ad hominem*, and deliberately injurious. But when he is paid back in his own coin he tends to become weepy, like one of the boxers good in the attack but incapable of taking punishment. He talks about vicious attacks against him, poisonous lies, attempts to destroy his good name and reputation. He upbraided Arafat and the Palestinian authority for selling out to the Zionists and, above all, for not building a democratic and incorruptible state. But how can he not know that this is a wholly unrealistic demand; why should the Palestinian state be different in character from the other Arab countries? He grimly attacks Arafat for having broken bread with Barak in the latter's home; but if the Israeli prime minister had refused to socialize with the Palestinian leader he would have been called a racialist (if not worse). Said attacked the late King Hussein of Jordan as the most repressive and reactionary ruler in the Middle East, and his attitude to other moderates in the Arab world is similar. One would have a hard time to find in the writings of this critical and humanist intellectual a single word of criticism, let alone condemnation, for the truly repressive regimes from Iraq to Libya.

Said has adopted the cause and the arguments of Arab nationalism and he is, of course, perfectly entitled to do so. But at the same time he claims to be a man of the left, an internationalist in excellent standing with progressives everywhere. One of Mr. Said's friends, whom he says he admires greatly, has proclaimed that the Israeli left is much worse than the right, and another (the Christian Arab Clovis Maksoud) has written that Arab intellectuals should have nothing to do with the new Israeli historians of the post-Zionist school because all they want is to refurbish Zionism.

Said appears in the role of a secular intellectual but writes books defending Islam against its detractors and cordially approves of a relentless attack, not against Zionism but against the poisonous Jewish religion and its horrible impact over three thousand years. He bitterly denounces the Western intellectuals who fought against Stalinism and its sympathizers in the 1950s in the framework of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, because the Congress was financed in large part by the CIA. To be sure, he would have attacked them anyway; the CIA's involvement only provided a wonderful opportunity to do so from high moral ground. But at the same time some of his writing is brought out by the main publisher of neo-Nazi literature in Europe, the man whom the Swedish authorities sent to prison for six months for racial incitement. Thus, in Said's book, collaboration with neo-Nazis is permissible, but resistance to Stalinism was reprehensible.

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The case of Edward Said, in the final analysis, is a sad one, for with all his great success in the United States, there is no room for him in the Arab East. He reminds one of Frantz Fanon, author of fire-eating books about the psychological benefits of violence, but whom the Algerian militants nevertheless did not regard as one of their own. Had he lived, independent Algeria would have imprisoned or shot him. Said might be a success on American campuses, but in the Palestinian territories his books have been banned. In a review some twenty years ago I compared him with some of the New York radical Jewish intellectuals in the 1930s, and I see no reason to modify this appraisal now. He is playing Trotsky ("no war and no peace") in an explosive situation in the age of weapons of mass destruction. The leaders of the Palestinian movement have not Said's sophistication; they have not heard of Adorno and Foucault, but they do have elementary common sense. They have realized that they need a state as the basis for any future political action, that the years that pass do not work in their favor—they may not be in Israel's favor either, but this is a different story. In brief, the sniping of the moralist of Morningside Heights is not needed at this time. Just as the young Said did not see the Jews around him in Talbiyeh and Jerusalem in 1947, he does not see the realities on the ground in Palestine/Israel in 1999.

No one can say with any assurance whether the peace process will lead to any major advance. It is quite unrealistic to assume, as many Israelis do, that Arab hostility in Palestine and throughout the Middle East will give way to feelings of friendship. It is unrealistic to believe that terrorism will cease. It could well be that the maximum the Israelis are willing to offer is too far from the minimum expectation of the Palestinians. It could well be that an accord reached will not hold. But one does not know without at least having tried, and the alternative is war, sooner or later. There is no unlimited time for negotiations: even in five or ten years a disaster could occur in the Middle East a thousand times worse than all the past wars taken together. And those trying to sabotage—under whatever pretext—the attempt to defuse a potentially very dangerous situation bear a very heavy responsibility. Seen in this light, is there that much difference between the Jewish settlers in Hebron, the other rejectionists in Israel, and the critical humanist from Talbiyeh and Columbia?

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REINHARD ENGEL

The Troublesome Road to Europe

THE TWISTS AND TURNS of the events following 1989 could best be observed from Austria—a country with three socialist neighbors. In August 1989, its foreign minister, in a joint action with his Hungarian counterpart, opened the iron curtain to let East Germans leave the Soviet Bloc. Other East European citizens soon followed—if not for good, then at least for a brief vacation in the West. Thus Austrians saw, for instance, the happy Czech family of Milan Sebek during the summer of 1990. Together with their three daughters, Mr. and Mrs. Sebek sat on the terrace of a small bed-and-breakfast establishment in Bad Dürnburg near Salzburg. Evenings, they watched the bejeweled guests of the music festival; during the day they hiked in the nearby forests. The trip from their homeland, just then between the worlds of communism and capitalism, did not yet follow the laws of the free market. After spending three days in that bed-and-breakfast, they moved into the two tents they had packed onto the roof of their Skoda car. They used Austrian travelers' coupons to get the most for their money. And finally, the owner of the pension gave them a special price, saying: "I can see that they don't have any money."

Austrian experts on tourism looked at the situation more dispassionately. According to the head of the Salzburg Association of Tourism, "Of our 200,000 beds, 35,000 don't have showers in their rooms. So, if some of these enterprises should close down a bit later, I don't care. After all, these low-priced tourists don't do any damage."

The pleasure they took in their new-found freedom led the Sebeks to overlook some of the bitter realities. They came as tolerated spectators of the beautiful and the rich. They were the cheap customers in market sectors already in decline. And as working representatives of the middle class, they were dependent, finally, upon the good graces of a landlady who herself did not belong to the winners among her own compatriots.

These sobering facts were similar to the fate of the countries that were pushed behind the iron curtain in 1947-48. Bohemia and Moravia,

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at the end of the Hapsburg monarchy, had been more industrialized than all other parts of that empire, including the territory of the (subsequent) Austrian republic. Intellectual life in Budapest and Warsaw had flourished between the two wars, and Slovenia, within the newly created Yugoslavia, had specialized in manufacturing modern, first-rate products.

The repositioning of these countries after 1989 must have been depressing for their citizens. When ranked in the United Nations Development Index, by 1995—during the shock of the changes in the "reform states"—Slovenia was ranked number 37, after Israel and Cyprus at 22 and 23, South Korea at 30, and Costa Rica at 34. The Czech republic was ranked at 39, the Slovak republic at 42, Hungary at 47, and Poland at 52. In that same vicinity were Trinidad and Tobago at 40, Bahrain at 43, Panama at 45, Mexico at 49, and Grenada at 51. Nearby Austria was in nineteenth place.

The distance between the Eastern and Western economic blocs had become ever larger, in spite of dozens of reform programs. Liberalizations of details could not overcome the demands for power by the communist party. There had been no market forces counterweighing the tight, centralized steering of investments or control of prices—on the contrary, the most powerful managers and regional politicians dominated these countries. Politically induced full employment of the population had made for inefficient enterprises. Artificially maintained low costs of food products, energy, and rents, which existed despite shortages, repeatedly led managers as well as consumers to make irrational decisions. One bought whatever was available—from soap to industrial products. Projected plans often ended up in the wastepaper basket, and the "second economy" of peasants, mini-merchants, and bunglers took on increasing importance.

The Soviet Union, in addition, had been put under pressure by Reagan's rearmament policies. Poland and Hungary were already at the brink of financial collapse: they had foreign debts and were able to make interest payments only with great difficulty. New credit was unavailable. And in each country the rulers' perceived legitimacy was minimal. Intellectual dissent, despite administrative and secret service chicanery, had increased.

In the center of this crumbling empire, Gorbachev tried to keep the communists in power—with the help of liberalizing measures. One such attempt was tolerating discussions between the Polish party and Solidarnosc. But no one expected, there or elsewhere, that, as Timothy Garton Ash noted, "the powerless would so quickly become the powerful." Not only local intellectuals like Václav Havel and Adam Michnik, but

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Western bankers, intellectuals, and entrepreneurs were astounded by the totally new turn of events.

In 1989, international businesses immediately recognized Eastern Europe as a new market. They knew about the lack of consumer products, and welcomed opportunities for the sale of goods. Eastern Europe, including Russia, needed, for instance, about three million cars per year. Every large Western supermarket chain mapped out its marketing strategies. Though at first a bit insecure, industry too made its plans soon after the "turn." The production director of Philips-Austria, for instance, recalls that at the beginning of the 1990s he could not believe that they were suddenly able to compete with Asian firms—even after a period of turbulence for Philips. Extensive restructuring was to have saved this electronics giant, a restructuring which would have included closing down various enterprises. One Austrian firm was on that list, and it could only be saved by lining it up with new Hungarian manufacturing sites that produced standard stereo equipment much more cheaply.

Essentially, European enterprises had lost some of their international competitiveness. Exchange rates were unfavorable, especially for France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Austria. The unexpected incorporation of the former East Germany further aggravated this situation. But the opening up of Eastern Europe provided new vistas, mostly due to the low cost of labor and the fact that it saved time to produce goods nearby rather than in Asia. Before long, customers began to order merchandise from one day to the next, thus further shortening the production cycle.

Ultimately, the communist elites renounced power without any bloodshed. (Only the Prague secret service wanted to show the party its strength by means of an outburst of brutality against peaceful demonstrators; and in Romania there was a short, bloody revolution.) Suddenly former dissidents were in the chancelleries, parliaments and presidential offices. They were poets and historians, philosophers and writers, but rarely women and men with any practical political or economic experience.

Then, the forces of reform were in the vanguard. They were opposed by the elites of the communist party who had outlived the "turn" politically and had now in part moved to the new parties on the social democratic left. But the lacunae after the fall of communism were enormous: there were no counterlists, no theories, no organizations, no movements or projects that could be followed, nor any visions. What came after

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was a sort of process without a subject. Eventually, pre-war formations of peasants and middle classes began to emerge.

The lines between modernism and traditionalism were no longer clear, and the classical oppositions between right and left even less so. In Hungary, for instance, the first coalition of the right was much less able to modernize and industrialize than the later coalition of the left under the communists. Yet in Poland in 1992, the left-leaning government put the brakes on privatization politics without fully stopping them. Nationalistic and chauvinistic tendencies, underpinned by anti-Semitic and anti-Gypsy feelings, quickly emerged. Events in Poland pointed to an immature party system, with low party membership, low voter turnout, and much volatility among both voters and their representatives: parties often split up, and voters changed parties or created new ones.

This heterogeneous political class consisted of inexperienced, idealistic newcomers and old cadres to whom democracy was foreign, all of whom were expected to solve problems—such as setting up the legal and administrative structures of a democratic state and reforming the economy—while never losing sight of all the social questions: the political scientists Jon Elster, Claus Offe, and Ulrich K. Preiss called this complicated, often chaotic process "The Rebuilding of the Ship at Sea." Nevertheless, democratic structures were quickly established and institutional changes ensued. (In the Czech and Slovak republics this happened later, due to the separation of that state.) All the constitutions encompassed Western-type rights of freedom and ownership. There were also positive formulations of rights difficult to guarantee in a liberal state, such as the right to work, or to receive equal pay for equal work.

The radical break with the past existed in everyday political life as well. The open political discourse and disagreements in parliament and the press shocked some people and often led to refusal and withdrawal. But soon the citizens demonstrated their beliefs in the voting booth—by toppling their governments. In Poland the first right-liberal government was replaced by a postcommunist one, and then a right one; in Hungary the government also went from right to left to right; in the Czech republic it went right, right, left. In Slovakia the left-national Vladimir Meciar managed to seize power, but was then replaced by a right-left coalition. Ultimately, the majority, despite many counter-arguments and trends, and a certain nostalgia for communism, essentially opted for the new democratic systems. Adam Michnik, a former Polish dissident and now the editor of the daily *Gazeta Wiborcza*, maintained

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in 1993 that, despite privatization and reforms of the local self-administrations, the majority of their proponents were disappointed. Still, according to Michnik, not even politicians of the left could envisage the return of the good old days of the welfare state, without unemployment and with free vacations for workers, education, and health insurance.

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IN ALL FIVE REFORM STATES it was clear that market-driven economic systems had to be established. But of what type? Economic interests clashed even more than political ones. A Reagan-type capitalism, or one like Chile's? Or a mixed economy, as in Austria or France? The new democratic politicians perceived a special danger emanating from the former communist elites who had allegedly left politics and could now take the lead in the new economies, mostly through uncontrollable privatization. Kleptocracies abounded. Their members were recognizable by their limousines, luxury villas, and wives clothed by Versace. Seventy-five to 85 percent of the population believed that none of these rich had earned their money honestly.

During the rebuilding of the new democracies, however, it was not enough to impede some from stealing the silverware, to keep kleptomaniacs away from existing markets, or to privatize state property: politicians had to establish the very fundamentals of capitalism. In each country they found some way of decontrolling prices, cutting subsidies in order to create true markets, and aiming at stable, convertible currencies. After the shock of rising prices, a restricted finance policy was to bring stability. But the weak Central European states could not follow through. Thus many "uncontrollable sectors" of the economy were taken over by criminal elements and by developing monopolies.

Industry was used as the motor for change. The Leninist dictatorships of Eastern Europe had been based on industrial economies. In the 1970s, the Soviet Union and its "satellite states" had produced electricity, airplanes, washing machines, radios, buses, and cars, but even the best of the latter could not compare in quality to Western products—be they food, textiles, or machinery. That discrepancy held true for nearly every consumer item, so that Western goods and firms soon dominated the markets. This phenomenon in turn engendered unemployment which, however, was compensated for within a few years by moving cheap labor production from Asia into Eastern Europe. Still, there was a dearth of experienced managers; and there remains the danger that

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wage-dependent productions requiring low skills will be the first ones to migrate to the east or southeast, to Bosnia or Ukraine.

The automobile industry was at the center of new industrial beginnings. Fiat and Opel invested in Poland, Volkswagen in the Czech and Slovak republics, Audi, Opel, Suzuki, and Ford in Hungary, and Renault in Slovenia. Since in these countries goods could be produced more cheaply than in the West, these firms were able to beat their competition, control a previously unavailable market, and improve the balance sheets in their home countries. All of this helped integrate the reform states into Western industry, although on a rather low level. Their future economic success will depend on whether they can work their way up during the next few years. That will depend on whether they will be able to improve their workers' skills rather than simply raise their wages, and on the creation of a large number of local small and mid-sized firms which can supply the big international plants while learning about new technology and management techniques from them.

The key to each country's economy, however, lies in its infrastructure. When Opel, for instance, sends its motors to Spain or Germany, the heavy freight cars must navigate a number of hours over secondary, single-track rail lines before reaching Wiener Neustadt, Austria, to rejoin the international rail network. In other areas, such transport is even more onerous. Highways and freight terminals are lacking—in countries which continue to mandate strong border controls, and long waiting lines are the rule. Moreover, the reform states' bureaucrats are unaware of the importance of a modern infrastructure. Hungary and Slovenia have already begun to build a rough network of new highways. But in Poland and in the Czech and Slovak republics some of the most important transportation arteries consist of just two lanes. State budgets are tight, and private capital is missing, so their plans have remained in the drawer for the past ten years. In telecommunications things have moved more quickly, primarily because foreign capital has been invested in that sector.

It is a vicious cycle: where infrastructures are inferior, as in eastern Poland, Hungary or Slovakia, new enterprises rarely get started, even when experienced workers are available. Therefore, the state needs to take the initiative by getting the region into the necessary shape for industry to move in.

Banking, however, thrives in the reform states. It keeps expanding, although there are large differences among the various locations. Many people in middle-class cities such as Budapest, Prague, and Warsaw, have credit cards and money in the stock markets, while the rest of the

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citizens don't even have bank accounts, and salaries still are being paid in bags of cash. In some regions money transfers are unknown—even more of a disadvantage for entrepreneurs who cannot rely on their multinational contacts. The communist system used just one bank, which took care of everything from international trade to internal credit. (Hungary alone had a divided banking system.) And even after the end of communism the financial sector remained weak and largely government-controlled. The finance ministers tried to bring down the galloping inflation. Credit—especially for new enterprises—was limited and expensive. On the other hand, state enterprises were given ample funds, thus throwing good money after bad. Bailing out large banks has been costly, and will be even more costly in some countries. The Hungarians solved the problem by selling their entire banking sector to foreign interests. They assumed that the government would thereby lose its control, which would be offset by the fact that modernization of the entire system would be paid for rather inexpensively, since the competition among international banking giants would reduce costs. This seems to have worked, and Hungarian banks are the most successful and professional ones in the region. Poland also followed suit by selling to foreigners, and the Czechs and Slovaks are now allegedly doing the same.

For the most part, the modernization of the banking systems in the reform states has been helpful. Now, people are more easily extended short- and long-term credit in their own country's currency, and actual interest rates fell during the last few years, helped by the competition and by stricter banking regulations. At the same time, investment banking began—via foreign take-overs and local capital markets. In Poland, Hungary and the Czech republic, these markets have begun to take on a certain importance, although their future as a sort of European stock market has not yet been decided. The effort of the Vienna stock market, however, which tried to establish itself as the regional East-Central European one, was unsuccessful.

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TOURISM HAS BECOME an important means to acquire foreign currency. A couple from Bavaria recounts that they have been coming to western Hungary for many years to bathe in its thermal waters, rid themselves of arthritic pains, and dine in the Thermal Hotel Bûck's elegant restaurant: "Our thermal hotels are actually money machines," says Hungary's new State Secretary for Tourism, a former successful banker;

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"Occupancy rates range between 85 and 95 percent." Thus tourism plays a large role in Hungary's finances: it has reduced the deficit in the country's balance of payments by more than half. Besides the spas and Budapest, Lake Balaton is the most important region. Moreover, many foreigners have bought second apartments in Budapest and country houses on the lake's shores, and then spend money in restaurants and on entertainment. Altogether, the infrastructure of Hungarian tourism started at a higher level than it did in the other former communist countries, although the major cities in Poland and the Czech republic did so as well. However, small towns and rural areas have developed much more slowly: credit is hard to come by; and an ever more demanding international public expects comfortable facilities.

Westerners who like to arrange for their own travel (rather than join tours) are often thrilled by the quaintness of towns that still seem mired in the Middle Ages, since under communism they never had the funds to modernize them. But sometimes the pleasures of travel are marred by the high rates of car and other kinds of theft. And Western visitors don't come at just any price: high hotel rates have encouraged tour operators to shun nights and arrange for only daytime visits to Prague; and when beautiful restaurants in Slovenia remain empty, it is due to overpriced menus. Unlike in, for instance, New York, the cost of taxis is not regulated, and travelers are easily rooked. Also, Slovakia is not the only country where on hotel registers two prices are listed: one for citizens and another for tourists. The latter may be double or triple the former. This keeps some tourists from even starting their trip.

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Aside from the privileged *nomenclatura*, at one time Eastern European societies were fairly egalitarian, though rough, and individuals tended to have more money to spend than merchandise to buy. But after the transformation of 1989, a dramatic recession lowered the level of income. The economic upswing that began in some sectors in 1992 engendered a rapid polarization between the rich and the poor. Life expectancy had been drastically lowered since the 1970s, and in Poland and Hungary there was a recognizable increase in poverty—all of which accelerated after "the turn." The unemployed were even worse off, since new safety nets first had to be created. Inflation played havoc with the salaries of state employees, whereas those of individuals working for foreign and export firms—especially those who knew foreign languages and something about marketing or banking—rose exponentially.

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Regional differences, as noted above, were also determining factors, as were foreign investments. And the transformation of the welfare state ended subsidies for food, rent, and heat, which led families to request help in the form of unemployment benefits or need. All this put the state under pressure to legislate for social justice. Despite all this (again, handled differently in each of the states), one cannot speak of the dissolution of the welfare state. A team of Western politologues as well as an Austrian survey concluded that "altogether, the post-communist welfare states have shown extraordinary endurance."

Still, the budgetary pressures engendered saving measures at all levels, as well as lower benefits. Retirement ages were raised and the percentage of annual raises was lowered. But the welfare principle is still in force in these countries, even though none of them are even close to "solving" their enormous problems. Nor did various forms of private initiatives, particularly in Hungary and Poland, bring the hoped-for improvements. However, the poor have not yet formed a distinctive, separate lower class, and—according to some economists—they could participate in the general economic upswing. Thus one could look at the situation in yet another way: that the boundary of poverty is so poorly defined because the average citizen is not really doing very well.

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THE FINAL STEP BACK TO EUROPE, for the countries bound by the Warsaw pact until 1989, is entry into the European market. Due to the change in their systems to democracy and to market economies, all five countries have become members of the World Bank and other international organizations, and have established independent connections with one another. The Czech republic was accepted by the OECD in 1995; Hungary and Poland in 1996. Since 1999 these three states have become members of NATO as well. However, these agreements are evaluated in various ways. The European Union emphasizes that it is dealing with an "asymmetrical opening of the markets in favor of these associated countries." The reform states point to the fact that so-called "sensible sectors" within the EU have not abolished tariffs and quotas in order to protect their own producers of, for instance, food, steel, chemicals, and textiles. Although the EU developed a number of technical and financial programs to help the reform states, the latter had expected more support, something like an updated Marshall Plan, and full entry into Western European markets for their agricultural products and labor forces.

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Separate treaties were subsequently signed, but these were still not fully on a par with those of the original members.

The enlargement of the EU was to have been advantageous to both sides. Aside from political arguments, such as stabilization and peace, it was thought that the entry of seven countries (including Romania and Bulgaria) would raise the GNP by 1.5 percent. But today the reform states do not compare well to the average states of the EU. Their economies are weak. When measured in terms of consumption, Slovenia reaches close to 60 percent per capita compared to the average of the EU, the Czech republic 58.4 percent, the Slovak republic 42.6 percent, Hungary 36.8 percent, and Poland 32 percent. Other indicators, such as unemployment rates and debts, are almost comparable, although inflation is still much higher than in the rest of Europe.

The entry into the European Union should have been the final step in these states' "return to Europe." But in some domains they will advance more quickly than in others. Just as Austria and Finland were already integrated long before their formal entry, so too Poland, the Czech republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Slovenia are now ready. Their industries function in a network tied to those in Germany and France, their wealthier citizens spend their vacations in Italy and Austria, and they watch American and British films on television. In many ways they are closer to Western Europe than to their former communist allies Romania, Bulgaria, or Russia. In fact, they endured a brutal modernization that many a Western country might not have withstood.

Today, citizens of reform states often live in various worlds at once. They see Western tourists dressed like teenaged prostitutes on their streets, and new hardware supermarkets finally enable them to beautify their homes. Grandmothers frequently don't have their own bank accounts, while their grandchildren are sending millions of dollars around the world via the Internet. The condition of many roads hearkens back to medieval times, while the new cables that are being laid beneath them are made of fiberglass. In many cities the decades change from block to block—from the fifties to the nineties, and back.

Economists observing these changes from outside, particularly from America, maintain that the reform states have not yet lived up to their full potential—that their taxes are too high, their employment markets unnecessarily inflexible, and national assistance too generous. But governments cannot choose their populations, and demands raised by experts like Jeffrey Sachs would be unacceptable and could lead to political destabilization. These states have to deal with existing potentials. First of all, they have a well-educated population whose salary levels are

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still far below those of their Western competitors. Secondly, the vicinity of Western European markets plays a large role. And thirdly, there is the—justified—demand by the people of Prague and Budapest that their weaker brethren not be left totally unprotected. U.S. scientists Barry Eichengreen and Richard Kohl speak of an "Iberian model." They expect a development similar to that of Spain and Portugal after their entry into the European Community: solid growth and modernization, but not at the rapid speed of Asia's tiger economies.

Ultimately, there is no longer any reason for West Europeans to look down on their neighbors, or on people such as Milan Sebek and his family. At present, they have more links with them than differences. All Europeans share many of their problems—problems that have become global. Poverty exists in the West as well as in the East, along with a growth in criminality. Unemployment and polarization of incomes require rethinking on both sides. And the end to lifelong workplaces with their replacement by short-term, project-specific jobs is hitting everyone, along with the difficulties incumbent when the terms of social security are being changed and expectations from government must be decreased. Much remains to be worked on in United Europe.

Postscript:

UNFORTUNATELY, NOT ALL AUSTRIANS THINK in such international, European ways. Joerg Haider's success in Austria's recent elections sent shock waves across Europe. Here was a decidedly right-wing party that by far outgrew the fringes reserved for its counterparts in other countries—and made it to the heart of the electorate, gaining 27 percent of the vote. The Freedom Party attracted workers and the self-employed, public officials and farmers, entrepreneurs and pensioners alike. This would not have been possible with simple right-wing propaganda alone.

Exit polls show that by far the most important motive of Haider's voters was a shady concept of "necessary changes," a feeling of disappointment with the ruling grand coalition of socialists and conservatives. But almost half of his electorate said that his *Ausländerpolitik*, his policy towards foreigners, had been at the heart of their decision. On this topic the Freedom Party had not been elegant. It charged widespread "asylum fraud," warned of an "overforeignization," and hinted at millions of East Europeans flooding Austria once the borders to future EU members were completely open.

These fears are deep-rooted, although hardly backed by evidence. Economists in Vienna say they cannot give exact figures for how many

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Hungarians, Poles, and Czechs would want to emigrate into Austria. The Vienna Institute for Comparative Economic Studies (WIIW) estimates that their numbers would be about one hundred thousand over a period of ten years—something a thriving labor market could easily absorb.

Currently, the Austrian economy is humming along successfully. And its positive growth and low unemployment can largely be attributed to two factors from outside the country: Austria's entry into the European Union in 1995, and the opening up of the East European markets to Austrian exports and investments. EU membership has led to considerable growth of exports to Western countries such as France and Spain. But it was Eastern Europe's return to capitalism and democracy that really got Austria's economy moving. There are thousands of Austrian joint ventures in central Eastern Europe; of the two hundred U.S. corporations based in Vienna, eighty coordinate their regional business from here.

Still, not everyone in Austria wants to see these dynamics. A recent poll among SMU managers in Burgenland (Austria's easternmost province, bordering on Hungary and Slovakia) said that more than half of them are pessimistic about EU enlargement. Only a quarter of them have developed an offensive strategy and hope to gain additional markets in the East.

Shortly before Austrians went to the polls on whether to join the European Union, a large part of the population was still undecided or even opposed. Haider's Freedom Party—and the Greens—mobilized for a "no." In response, the government and Austria's still-important social partners—industrialists and unions—started a strong campaign that was not limited to posters and TV ads but went down to the shop floors where workers and managers knew how important the European market was for them. The result was a solid 65 percent majority in favor of the Union.

A similar effort might be necessary focusing on EU enlargement. There is no such thing as the autarky of a small European country; there is no place for racism or xenophobia in a modern, internationally integrated industrial society. Austrian workers cannot be assured that they will keep exactly the jobs they hold today. But they ought to know that many of their future jobs will be closely tied to those of their colleagues in the East.

Translated and abridged by Edith Kurzweil

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H. J. KAPLAN

Reflections on Sade

HABENT SUA FATA LIBELLI, said the mysterious Terence, meaning that books have a destiny (or as we would say a history) of their own. Witness the sulfurous opus of the Marquis de Sade, once barely mentionable in polite society, now the subject of a huge body of exegesis and biographical studies—the latest of which in English are Neil Schaeffer's *Marquis de Sade* (Knopf, $35.00) and Francine du Plessix Gray's *At Home With the Marquis de Sade* (Simon & Schuster, $27.50). Both are well-conceived, readable, and provocative—for this reader at least, who is safely beyond the age when one reads erotica with bated breath, or, as an aristocratic French lady once memorably put it, "with one hand." Schaeffer and Gray use the same subtitle, "A Life," and they cover much the same ground as Maurice Lever's monumental biography (an English version of which was published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux in 1993), but they do so usefully and agreeably, having pruned away much of the repetitive detail and rhetoric which Lever and his predecessors felt obliged to include in the record; and yet they still leave us with radically different assessments of the value and import—and above all the future—of Sade's life and work.

Born in 1740 under Louis XV, imprisoned for his pornographic writings and licentious behavior for half of his adult life, a total of almost thirty years, Donatien Alphonse François, the Marquis de Sade, finally gave up the ghost in Charenton, an asylum for the insane, in 1814, the year of Waterloo. Little was known of his work at that time, and what was "known" of his life was often untrue, but a great deal was bruited about and texts were available *sous le manteau*; and eventually a place was found for the latter in what was called the "hell" of the French National Library, the section reserved for books one needed a special dispensation to read. Nevertheless, a fair sampling of Sade's work circulated like a low-grade fever throughout the nineteenth century. He was savored by Baudelaire and appreciated by Flaubert, to mention only these two; and like the unfortunate Sacher-Masoch his name was immortalized by the lexicographers, for whom *sadism* became a common noun. This, more or less, is where most members of my generation came in; but the story had only just begun.

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Just before and during World War I, in an eerie reaction to what looked like the suicide of our civilization, the wounded poet Guillaume Apollinaire set out to make an icon of the Divine Marquis, as he called him; and this struck the Dadaists, and then the Surrealists and many others, as a brilliant idea. The great thing was to have done with an obviously bankrupt moral and social order; and it seemed impossible to go about it more thoroughly than the author of *The 120 Days of Sodom*—a man who not only invited his readers to swallow excrement but also proposed to trash our inherited logic and morals by glorifying murder and mayhem in pursuit of sexual satisfaction while vituperating the God whose existence he so vehemently denied.

For Apollinaire, who frequented anarchists and augmented his income by trafficking in pornography, the promotion of Sade as a serious philosopher and courageous defender of human freedom may have been a sort of Dada joke. For others, and notably for a young friend of Apollinaire's named Maurice Heine, Sade became a cause in the furtherance of which he devoted much of his life, recruiting adepts and financial backers, unearthing manuscripts, and becoming one of the founding members of the Sadean cult which—with the help of the scholars and academic people whom Maurice Lever dubbed the "Sadologists"—worked indefatigably during the twenties and thirties to move Sade out of the "hell" of the Bibliothèque Nationale and establish him as an authentic Great Man in the French literary tradition.

Needless to say, they succeeded. By the end of the Second World War, more text was available to add to the three extant versions of *Justine, Juliette*, and the interminable *120 Days of Sodom*, which I first read or—more exactly—attempted to read in Georges Bataille's house in Vezelay circa 1946. Bataille, a Nietzschean and the philosopher and poet of "transgression," was to become the editor of *Critique*, one of the most important avant-garde periodicals of the postwar years. He deplored my inability to stomach *Sodom*, which had been discovered and published in part by a Berlin psychiatrist early in the century, and (thanks to the financial and moral support of the Vicomte de Noailles and his wife, Marie-Laure) republished in France by the indefatigable Heine in 1929. When I first saw it in the ruins of Vezelay just after the war it was still a banned book, but with Pétain gone and censorship out of fashion the learned professors could go about their work constituting the Sade archives out of the police records, correspondence, and family papers, miraculously preserved and discovered in the attic of the then current Comte de Sade. The latter, a devout Catholic, knew nothing of his ancestor's literary career and cared less—the main thing for him was

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that the *divine* Marquis, for so long a skeleton in the family closet, had a pedigree far more important than his standing as a writer: he was a descendant of Saint Louis, an early Bourbon king of France.

This part of the story, involving the origins and early avatars of "Sadology," is recounted in a curiously deadpan manner in Francine Gray's epilogue. The tone is bemused, restrained, only mildly regretful, as Gray contemplates a cascade in Sade's native country, the Vaucluse, and reflects that his project as a man and a thinker was—let's face it—inordinate, not to say preposterous, "because he never grasped the fundamentals of civilized life: which have to do with accepting, with a measure of serenity, the ultimate necessity of compromise." The result was catastrophic, Gray tells us, but not entirely unadmirable, after all. "For until his thirty-sixth year, Sade had inundated all that surrounded him with the rage of his desires, mastered the women he coveted as readily as the torrent sculpts its rocky beds. . .until the day when his society, at the behest of one powerful woman, imprisoned him, and he soon began filling tens of thousands of pages with the most audacious texts ever to flow out of any author's pen."

These comments provide a surprising coda to Gray's narrative which, until these final paragraphs, had kept its cool, in the manner of a *New Yorker* profile, avoiding anything so crass as literary and/or moral judgment. Sadology normally assumes the greatness of its subject, but Gray—hitherto at least—had seemed to be an exception to the rule.

Not so—resuming my own narrative—the literary intellectuals, critics, and publishers who had set out to rehabilitate the divine Marquis during the decades preceding World War II. These were enthusiasts, and once the hiatus of the occupation and the Vichy regime was over they resumed their campaign in the libertarian postwar "existentialist" atmosphere of Saint-Germain-des-Près. Around 1950 Pierre Klossowski, brother of the painter Balthus, published an enigmatic study called *Sade, My Fellow Man*, a prestigious but little-read book (still available, apparently, in a 1967 edition published by Seuil) which gave rise to a good deal of chatter in the press; and a year or so later we had Simone de Beauvoir's long, earnest, and inconclusive essay, "Should Sade Be Burned?"

The author of *The Second Sex* could hardly be comfortable with a man who took such delight in the torture and murder of women, even if he really preferred boys; and besides, she was not enthralled with Sade's prose. But as a revolutionary, resolutely opposed to the bourgeois moral order, the Marquis could not be all bad, so de Beauvoir's essay was helpful to the cause, on the whole; and it was soon followed by Albert Camus's *The Rebel*, the book which became the occasion for his

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famous break with Sartre and his acolytes, including de Beauvoir. In the process of disengaging from Sartre's people, who were then ruling the roost in literary Paris, Camus dourly pointed out that Sade had been historically the first to raise the banner of "absolute negation"—the first, that is, "to mount a coherent offensive which fashions the arguments of libertine thought into a unique and enormous war machine"; and although it was clear that he took a dim view of "absolute negation," the effect of presenting Sade in this manner amounted—in a book which generally took a sympathetic view of *l'homme révolté*—to a sort of consecration which Camus had surely not intended. In short, Sade had emerged from the shadows; he was a figure to be reckoned with, like Nietzsche, Lautréamont, and the other "rebels" who would continue to fascinate Camus even as he distanced himself from the fantasies and rhetoric of his youth.

At this point, with serious publishers involved and (for all that it is said to have no odor) smelling money, Sade was becoming something of a growth industry, and not only in France. In the wake of Algernon Swinburne and other decadents, the divine Marquis had long been taken up by the avant-garde across the channel, and in Germany as well. In the U.S. the famous Grove edition of *Justine and Other Writings* was on its way, to be published in 1965 with a justificatory preface by Barney Ross and a dithyrambic foreword by the translators, Seaver and Wainhouse, who hailed the book as "one of our civilization's treasures." Of course, legal barriers were still formidable, but these (as the more elderly among us will recall) were triumphantly being stormed in country after country, with the assent if not at the instigation of the United States Supreme Court—with the result that practically the entire opus became available to the general public during the postwar years and Sade finally received his apotheosis: the prestigious Pleiade edition of 1990-1995, with a book-length introduction by Michel Delon—and no apologies to Dante, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Montaigne, Racine, or any of the other luminaries for which the Pleiade had originally been designed. I cannot recall that anyone has ever again raised the idea of burning Sade, even in jest, with the noble exception of Roger Shattuck—of whom more later. The point of the Pleiade edition, *inter alia*, was simply to recognize that the hapless descendant of Saint Louis, so cruelly persecuted in his lifetime, was a precursor, a liberator—a certified Great Man in what must be the world's most prestigious literary tradition.

Although Sade for obvious reasons has never been a popular writer, if only because he is so painful to read, sales were considerable from the outset and interest has been sustained by the historians and, outside the

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universities, by the prevailing conventional wisdom which holds that an author so offensive—and an antinomian philosopher to boot—must have something important to tell us. And both these rationales are at work, albeit differently, in these new biographies, which are the most recent in English, so far as I know. Neil Schaeffer is a professor of English Literature at Brooklyn College; an all but unconditional admirer of *Justine*, *The Philosopher in the Boudoir*, and *The 120 Days of Sodom*, and a generally sympathetic observer of Sade's career, he has read the record with care and discernment and produced a full-length portrait with earnest attempts at the sort of psychoanalytical insight one accepts, if at all, with reservations, given the wealth of source material which makes it possible to prove almost anything (and its opposite) about this strange man. Aside from a citation in his bibliography, Schaeffer makes little reference to his immediate predecessor in what is now a crowded field: Francine du Plessix Gray's above-mentioned *At Home With the Marquis de Sade*, which also produces a portrait, to be sure, rather more focused than Schaeffer's on Sade's relations with women.

In his life as in his work the divine Marquis was preternaturally obsessive and repetitious; and, in view of the thousands of pages of correspondence and family papers collected in the Bibliothèques Sade, the massive biographies by Maurice Heine, Gilbert Lely, and Maurice Lever, it must have required more than a dose of masochism to take the measure of a writer who—despite the violence of his material—distills a boredom unique, even among the epigoni of Jean Jacques Rousseau. This is not to accuse Gray (or, for that matter, Schaeffer) of morbidity or of wasting our time. However differently they approach Sade, they both proceed from the implicit assumption that the "case" of the divine Marquis and his *fata* in our culture have something important to tell us about our post-enlightenment societies; on this point they are clearly right and at one, even if the writer and thinker whom Schaeffer sees as a towering genius winds up in Gray's profile as a confused and defeated old man.

In his own time, to be sure, it was his notoriety as an alleged criminal and confirmed pornographer which—far more than his philosophic doctrine and/or his plethoric prose—constituted his personage; and this was his misfortune, since the various regimes which succeeded each other in France during and after the reign of Louis XV all felt constrained by public opinion to keep this man under lock and key, whether or not he was guilty of the turpitudes attributed to him. There was an odor of brimstone about him from the outset, long before he had ever committed his fantasies of flagellation and sodomy to paper. On the surface he seemed

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to be part of what might be called the party of the libertines, which was at least as subversive of the old order as the political dissidents, the *philosophes*; and in his twenties he was already becoming famous for being infamous, i.e., for dilapidating the family fortune on whores and riotous living. But to make matters worse he was not really part of any party at all. And this, as his father once observed to the young man's uncle (the Abbé de Sade, a priest who lived a relatively discreet but typically dissolute life in one of the family's chateaux in Provence) was what most disquieted one about the Marquis. He walked alone. For all his blond good looks and aristocratic manners, there was something inward, gloomy, and solitary about him and this struck his father—himself a notorious rake—as a sinister omen. Already, at the Lycée Louis-le-Grand and during his military service in the king's Light Horse Cavalry, he had made no friends, frequented only his doting aunts, family retainers, and inferiors who did his bidding.

In any event, by 1760 the young Marquis's *libertinage* might well have seemed to the Count, a disappointed man on the downside of his own turbulent life, as being out of phase with the spirit of the times. France—Paris at least, if not Versailles—was becoming a shade more sedate, not to say bourgeois. The country was "coming down" from the extraordinary excesses of wildness and licentiousness which had marked the Regency, after the long and relatively straitlaced reign of Louis XIV. The elder Sade was perennially short of cash, and he and his brother, the priest, had some brushes with the law (on morals charges) during this period. Such things were rarely pressed against people of their rank in the France of the old regime, where sodomy was epidemic, but police records were kept and miscreants—like Sade's talented cousin, Mirabeau—were often imprisoned or exiled to their estates, in order to keep the libertinage of the upper classes in bounds and, as it were, *entre nous*. The Count's diplomatic career had ended in disrepute and the Condés (a branch of the Bourbons to whom his wife was related) were under a bit of a cloud. The prudent thing, obviously, was to marry the young man off as quickly and richly as possible, before he got into a really nasty scrape and while the price of their extremely blue blood was still high. So a marriage was negotiated and concluded, but it was already too late, since Sade proceeded to get in trouble anyway; and the upshot was the first episode of the extraordinary soap opera which the "Sadologists," including the authors under review, have spun out of Sade's escapades and his passionate involvement with the females in the family into which he married—his wife, Renée-Pélagie de Montreuil, her mother, and her sister, who each in her manner fell in and out

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of love with the young Marquis, leaving the bourgeois gentilhomme Montreuil, a wealthy magistrate, to pick up the pieces.

These people were indefatigable correspondents; and their letters were kept. Together with the official records they describe the prolonged downfall which was the rest of Sade's life—long periods of confinement punctuated and occasioned by the bouts of bizarre and violent sexual behavior which occurred whenever he was released. These were the infamous "incidents" which not only made a legend of him, locked up, as it were, by popular demand: they made him a writer as well. In prison he continued to be treated as an aristocrat, liberally supplied by his long-suffering wife with books, writing materials, and the dildos he used to stimulate his erotic fantasies and achieve his laborious orgasms. This persisted, we learn from his plethoric correspondence, until the first week of the fateful month of July 1789, when he was hastily removed from his apartment in the Bastille (for standing at the battlements and haranguing the mobs which were gathering around the ancient fortress) and transferred to an asylum for the mentally ill in Charenton. This was excellent timing, of the kind Sade often produced in his novels, to make a philosophical point or, as in this case, to explain some otherwise incredible turn of events, such as Sade's survival during the Terror as a victim of royal persecution. The Bastille, as every French schoolchild knows, was stormed on the fourteenth, and the governor, guards, and other personnel murdered or dispersed; and so the tocsin was sounded for the Great Revolution in the aftermath of which France—and Western civilization, indeed, the entire world—are living today.

For Sade, however, the destruction of the Bastille meant first of all the loss of his personal effects, including his library, the voluminous text of his manifesto-novel, *The 120 Days of Sodom*, and many other manuscripts as well. For this, as he told one of his correspondents, he wept "tears of blood." And so, with his liberation from Charenton and his emergence as Citizen Sade, began an extraordinary adventure during which he lived frenetically and with a sort of burlesque panache on the crest of the revolutionary wave, barely escaping the guillotine during the last days of Robespierre. During Thermidor he worked feverishly to establish himself as a playwright and novelist—only to find himself back in confinement under the Directorate and Napoleon, once again by popular demand. When he died, monstrously obese, at seventy-four, his surviving son and the authorities at Charenton were much relieved to see the last of him. During the last six years they had treated him decently, on the whole, as an involuntary but paying guest; but he still had a way of molesting small boys; and he had begun a final bizarre affair

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with a seventeen-year-old laundress whose mother allowed her to visit the once and future Marquis occasionally in his room—for a modest fee.

The striking thing about Sade's story was and remains its richness and allusiveness as a historical "case"—a prism in which the famous "lumières" (the Enlightenment) of the eighteenth century were most luridly reflected. One cannot contemplate the life and work of the Marquis de Sade without sensing that a great mutation was underway in our civilization, and that this involved something more fateful than what appeared on the surface—i.e., the transformation of the French from subjects to citizens and the reshaping of political institutions. For most of the *philosophes* and their followers these were the central issues, to be sure, and the most immediate; but there was a radical element in the eighteenth century which looked beyond them to a more far-reaching revolution. At stake—a century before Nietzsche—was nothing less than the redefinition of man. But this would take us far beyond our purview since—thanks to that radical element, precisely—the perspectives opened up by the Enlightenment have not merely remained to haunt us; they have become in many respects our history: what distinguishes the West from the rest.

For this reason I find it incomprehensible that neither Gray nor Schaeffer has seen fit to mention, let alone contend with, what strikes me as far and away the most searching and brilliant consideration of the divine Marquis to have appeared not only in recent years but since "Sadology" began. This is a long chapter (seventy-one pages) in Roger Shattuck's *Forbidden Knowledge: From Prometheus to Pornography*, published by St. Martin's Press in 1996. The book is at least listed in Gray's bibliography, and in the penultimate paragraph of her epilogue, cited above, we did hear a faint echo of some of Shattuck's moral and social concerns, albeit reduced to a sigh of pity, *diminuendo*, for the unhappiness of Sade's life and the sheer childlike unreasonableness of his character —with only a muted reference to the quality of his work and to what he ("one of the great rebels of modern times," she says in her very last words) is actually proposing for our edification. As for Schaeffer, he ends no less lamely, advising us to read this boring and humorless writer with care, "for he, more than anyone, can teach us what it means to be human in the extreme"—which presumably means, according to one of Sade's mouthpieces (in *Philosophy in the Boudoir*) eating the raw heart torn from the body of a child while buggering the still-writhing corpse and explaining interminably that there is nothing more sublime than violating a moral order which does not, in any event, exist.

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MURIEL SPARK

The Young Man Who Discovered the Secret of Life

THE MAIN FACT WAS, he was haunted by a ghost about five feet high when unfurled and standing upright. For the ghost unfurled itself from the top drawer of a piece of furniture that stood in the young man's bed-sitting room every night, or failing that, every morning. The young man was a plasterer's apprentice, or so he claimed.

But I have been told on good authority that this is absolutely absurd. There is no such thing: plasterers do not have apprentices. Ben, as the young man was called, was very concerned when I wrote to point this out. He decidedly preferred to change his status to that of "bricklayer's" or, better still, "kerblayer's apprentice," even although this meant putting himself in an unemployed category while doing a bit of plastering on the side to make a weekly wage of sorts.

I myself had only heard of Ben through correspondence, for he had written to me a most unusual letter, care of my publisher. In it, the then "plasterer's apprentice" told about the visitations of the ghost. Normally, I would have torn up the letter; I only replied to him because one of his statements contained the challenging one that through his ghost Ben had discovered, or was by way of discovering "the secret of life." In my reply, I was cautious about the "apparition" as I called his ghost, but I more definitely pointed out that "the secret of life" was most likely to mean the secret of his own personal life, not life in general. The lives of people hold many secrets, I emphasized. There was possibly no one "secret" applying to us all. So, anyway, I wished him luck, and mailed off the letter. Goodbye.

But no, it wasn't goodbye, as I might have foreseen. It was true that I didn't write to him for some time, but he continued to write letters to me in some inexplicable need that he felt to express his odd experiences, real or imagined as the case might be.

According to Ben's letters to me his greatest problem with the ghost was now blackmail and jealousy, for the ghost was truly jealous of Ben's girlfriend.

"I can haunt whoever and wherever I wish," the ghost told Ben. "It is easy for me to inform the whole of your acquaintance that you are

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only a plasterer looking for a steady job, and as for being a kerblayer or even a bricklayer, that is far from the truth."

"Please yourself who you haunt," said Ben. "I am totally indifferent. The fact remains that I am a kerblayer at heart, whatever the nature of the temporary job as plasterer, etc., etc., that I am economically forced to accept from time to time."

"And what is 'etc., etc.'?" said the ghost nastily. "Do you mind explaining?"

"Curl up and return to your drawer," Ben bade him. "And mind you don't crush my pajamas."

"Your pajamas," said the ghost, "have no place in the top drawer where I come from. They are not pure silk; they are Marks & Spencer's."

Ben was secretly very anxious lest it should be known he was not a kerblayer after all. But he was a brave fellow. "Get back to your place or else," he said.

The ghost curled up again, murmuring, "At least you admit that I have a right to be here. As it happens I know what is going to win the three-thirty tomorrow. It is Bartender's Best."

True enough that horse won the race and Ben was furious with himself for failing to take the tip, for he liked to play the horses when he had some money.

"Any more tips?" he asked the ghost that night.

"I thought you would ask that question," said the ghost. "But as you know, your girlfriend doesn't like betting. If you give her up I'll tell no one your secret and I'll give you good racing tips."

"Do you know what?" said Ben. "You are getting on my nerves. You are the result of stale air, neither more nor less. Stale air becomes radioactive. It becomes luminous. If I open the window you will gradually disappear."

"Not me," said the ghost. "Not me, I won't."

"I can't think of any more mindless occupation than to be a ghost in that post-mortem way you have in coming and going. So very unnecessary. I could have you psychoanalyzed away."

Enter into the story Genevieve, young and fair, a designer of scarecrows, Ben's girlfriend: Ben was convinced that her occupational status, the only type of status that apparently he knew, was beneath his, particularly now that he had become "Profession: kerblayer's apprentice." The passion with which the ghost despised Genevieve could only be matched by Ben's genuine and desperate love for her. In the meantime

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the ghost continued to unfurl its five feet and to give Ben advice like "psychoanalyze your crazy pavements."

"The ghost is a terrible snob," Ben wrote. "He makes me feel great and terrible—"

In fact, Ben changed his patronizing attitude towards the girl only after Genevieve borrowed his sun-hat, his jeans, and one of his shirts to make up one of her scarecrows. She painted a turnip in the likeness of Ben's face. When she had set up this scarecrow in a field everyone knew that it was modeled on Ben. Everyone smiled. The terrible snob ghost came to report this to Ben, adding that a cow's milk had already been turned by the scarecrow.

On the previous day Ben had won twenty-four pounds on a horse, quite on his own hunch. So he skipped his usual visit to the job center and took a bus out of town to the field where Genevieve's handiwork was flapping. Two cars had drawn up by the side of the road, and the occupants were admiring the work of art, as one of them called it. "It's the image of a young builder's mate who once worked on my property," she said.

So instead of taking the effigy amiss Ben was full of admiration for Genevieve. He rang her up and made her fix a date for their marriage, never mind that he was at present out of work.

The ghost unfurled himself again that night, but when he heard of Ben's proposal to Genevieve, he returned to the top drawer from whence he came, curled up and disappeared. "This quenching of the ghost," Ben wrote, "is to me the secret of life." He said "quenching" for he felt the ghost had been thirsty for his soul, and had in fact drunk his fill.

Ben never again won on the horses, although he became a master-bricklayer, a prosperous man, specializing in crazy-paving.

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JERZY PILCH

Other Pleasures

When, in the Year of Our Lord 1990, Pawel Kohoutek, Doctor of Veterinary Science, looked out the window and beheld his current woman crossing the lawn, with his usual conceited fatalism he imagined that an adventure had befallen him which ought to serve as a warning for all. Kohoutek's current woman was wearing a navy blue overcoat; her divine skull was covered in a skittish little hat, while the colossal suitcase she was dragging behind her left a dark trail of ultimate defeat in the pale November grass.

Even if she had just dropped by for a chat, even if she were paying me a chance, unexpected visit, that alone would be a sufficiently terrifying story, thought Kohoutek. That alone would be a story worthy of a book. But Kohoutek's current woman hadn't just come by to visit. She was hauling the suitcase along with both hands, while upon her narrow shoulders she bore a backpack filled to bursting. Though Kohoutek had known her for a mere seventeen weeks, he knew perfectly well what was in the suitcase, and what was in the backpack. In the suitcase were books, and in the backpack all of her other possessions. Kohoutek could close his eyes and list the items one by one, with the greatest of ease he could name all the components of her wardrobe: seven black T-shirts, two white blouses, two khaki men's shirts, one gray sweat suit with white trim, three black miniskirts, one pair of jeans, two pairs of low-heeled sneakers, a pair of thigh-length boots which had belonged to Kohoutek's current woman's mother, a black turtleneck sweater, a man's gray tweed jacket in which she looked fabulous, panty hose and several dozen pairs of exclusively white panties of various shapes and sizes. Yes, Kohoutek's current woman had packed up all her chattels and had traveled here so that finally, after the fearful torments of seventeen weeks of brief encounters, she could move in with Kohoutek for good. She had settled her accounts, cleaned out her room, taken down from her bookcase all of Milan Kundera's books in Polish, Broch's *The Tempter*, Tatarkiewicz's *History of Philosophy*, and slim volumes of verse by Stanislaw Barańczak and Ryszard Krynicki. With a perverse solicitude she had also packed the collected works of the greatest living Polish writer, whom she adored platonically, as a reader, and about whom Kohoutek was decidedly unplatonically jealous. Kohoutek was brutishly

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jealous, and he knew what he was about: the greatest living Polish writer belonged to the immortal generation of inveterate womanizers. In a word, Kohoutek's current woman had packed up her things and her books, handed her keys in to the landlady, gone to the bus station, bought a ticket and come to Kohoutek's home town. She had never been here before, but from what Kohoutek had told her she was intimately familiar with this community inhabited exclusively by adherents of the Lutheran faith.

Kohoutek is in the insufferably sentimental habit of recounting stories of the Cieszyn region to his current women. They fix their gaze upon him, and attempt, to no avail in his opinion, to suppress their excessive admiration, while he spins tales about Partecznik, Dziechcinka, and Jurzykowo; he tells of the house built by his great-grandfather, the master butcher Emilian Kohoutek, and of the lawn that was once the courtyard of the great slaughterhouse. It goes without saying that Kohoutek is fully aware that telling his current women about his native land is not merely an insufferable custom. Kohoutek is aware that it is also a ruinous one. In this case at least, thinks Kohoutek, watching his current woman crossing the lawn, in the case of this inconceivable story I have good reason to think of my ruin. I was utterly wrong to have told her about the Cieszyn region; I shouldn't have said a word about myself, I shouldn't have given her my address, my name, I shouldn't have agreed to everything, promised her goodness knows what, shouldn't have spent time in her crazy company.

How futile, how rhetorically empty, and, thank heaven, how short-lived were Kohoutek's lamentations. He shouldn't have gotten on express bus A. He shouldn't have traveled a thousand times between one town and the other. He shouldn't have asked any questions, and he especially shouldn't have asked the first question. Sorry to disturb you, miss, but what are you reading? He shouldn't have worn down his central nervous system with inordinate doses of world. It was that simple. Kohoutek heard, or perhaps whispered, the first verses of his great lament: the recollection of the maw of that leviathan of an express bus, in which he had caught sight of her for the first time, passed through his mind, but nothing more. There was no time for even the most stylistically enchanting threnody. Kohoutek watched his current woman crossing the lawn, while at the same time his brain was working with deadly precision. Kohoutek was wondering if any of the inhabitants of the house had already spotted her.

Kohoutek's current woman might have been spotted by Kohoutek's mother. She might have been spotted by Kohoutek's father. She might

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have been spotted by the pastor's wife or by the pastor. She might have been spotted by Miss Wandzia or by Miss Wandzia's mother. She might have been spotted by Oma, Kohoutek's grandmother. The Postmaster, Kohoutek's grandfather, as he took some fresh air, might also have come to the conclusion that someone closely associated with Kohoutek was on the lawn. Kohoutek's current woman might also have been seen by Kohoutek's child, and she might have been noticed by Kohoutek's wife. Anyone might have spotted her. But with a tiny bit of luck, or rather with a huge bit of luck, it might be that no one had spotted her. The final preparations for Oma's birthday the following day were under way, and besides, since that morning, in fact since the previous evening, the attention of the household had been occupied with a two-liter jar of beef meatballs that Oma, Kohoutek's grandmother, had hidden somewhere. The matter was pressing, since the meatballs were to be consumed within eight days of purchase. Two days had already passed. Time was advancing inexorably towards certain definitive formulae: a two-liter jar of beef meatballs past its consume-by date meant an eternity exploding in sulfurous flames.

The pastor's wife had initiated the hunt for the missing meatballs when she asked at supper: "What about the meatballs?"

"What meatballs?" said Kohoutek's mother, answering a question with a question.

"The meatballs I bought yesterday; I'm asking because they're to be consumed within eight days of purchase, and two days have already passed."

"Oma—" Kohoutek's mother turned to Oma, Kohoutek's grandmother; his mother sat next to her and, because Oma was deaf, Kohoutek's mother would repeat what was said at table once more, loudly and distinctly. Kohoutek, who could hardly be called an unbiased observer of events, always had the impression that the members of the household were in the mysterious habit of passing utterances from one person to another.

"Oma, where are the meatballs that the pastor's wife bought yesterday? I'm asking because they're to be consumed within eight days of purchase."

"They're in the refrigerator," replied Oma.

This had taken place yesterday, but Kohoutek remembers it as clearly as if it had been today. Kohoutek can see himself—yes, that's him, Kohoutek!—as he rises from the table, betakes himself to the pantry, opens the refrigerator and looks inside. Many foodstuffs are arrayed

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upon the shelves lit up in that polar glare; but there are, incontrovertibly, no beef meatballs.

When it transpired that the meatballs were also not in other places accessible to mortals, everyone clearly realized what they had in any case already suspected. The meatballs must have shared the fate of the wieners, frankfurters, meatloaves, cutlets, smoked chickens, roasts, tripe, sausages, and many, many other dishes that Oma had diligently and, by and large, irretrievably hidden.

The previous day's search once again fills Kohoutek's head as it rests upon the window. Though it happened the day before, now it seems to Kohoutek that it took place years ago. The search had taken up the whole of the previous evening and the whole of that afternoon. Yet as time passed, the search party, losing patience because of its lack of success, began to suffer from a loss of morale. Spectral emblems of apathy, ill-will, and even rebellion began to manifest themselves above the heads of the weary sleuths.

If the truth be told, the pastor's wife took no part whatsoever in the search. Immediately after dinner, which comprised mushroom soup with pasta, minced veal cutlets, red cabbage salad, potatoes, and cherry compote, as soon as she had taken her last mouthful, after she had discreetly spat out the last cherrystone onto her saucer, the pastor's wife, annoyed and irritated by the upheavals caused by the ebb and flow of the hunt, changed and went over to the church hall to a meeting of her ladies' circle. The pastor announced that he would check to see if the jar had not been concealed behind the books in his study. With a somewhat exaggerated assiduity he closed the white-lacquered door firmly behind him and a dead silence immediately ensued, clearly proving that once again inspiration had come to him and that he was, in an uncommon haste, hurriedly scribbling down the letters and the words of one of his fiery sermons. Oma, having secreted the meatballs, had herself disappeared no one knew where, or rather everyone knew, since it was probably the same place as always. Kohoutek's wife was studying foreign languages. Kohoutek's child was watching satellite television. His grandfather was sleeping the avid sleep of a shortsighted man who only in his dreams can see things far away. Miss Wandzia was playing the violin; while Miss Wandzia's mother was spying on her through the keyhole, because sometimes, instead of practicing, Miss Wandzia would play simple pieces from memory and at the same time would read a romantic novel propped open on the music stand. In a word, everything was as it always was.

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Only Kohoutek's parents persevered with the search. But for the moment they were in the attic. From above could be heard the shifting of furniture, the creak of cupboards being opened and drawers being pulled out—the inimitable sounds that accompanied the revelation of the most secret hiding places. Knowing how thorough his old folks were, Kohoutek was well aware that they were hardly likely to raise their heads and look out the window. Either way, though, there was no more time to lose.

Kohoutek's current woman was walking across the lawn that had once been the courtyard of the great slaughterhouse. On her back she carried the backpack filled with her belongings, while behind her she dragged the suitcase full of books.

Kohoutek ran downstairs, silently crossed the hallway, pulled aside a piece of the wainscoting and, taking a secret shortcut he had last used thirty years before during illicit childhood games, passed onto the veranda. The smell of apples had the intensity of autumn thunder. Kohoutek opened the door of the veranda with its orange-tinted glass panels, and his feet stood upon the weary grass of November. Rounding the house, he began to run to meet his current woman. Led by something other than himself, he was headed for the most apocalyptic assignation of his life.

• • •

He ran around the house and saw his current woman passing in front of the huge dining room window. The light was on inside, the table was being laid for supper, and the drapes had not been closed. She walked straight ahead; she didn't yield to the most natural impulse in the world, she didn't turn her head toward the light that flooded over her, and she didn't look into the illuminated interior.

Damn her, she knows I'm not there so she doesn't even look, thought Kohoutek to himself as he lurked behind the corner of the building. Dear God, I'm not taking Your name in vain, but how is it that that woman knows everything, always, everywhere? How does she know I'm not in the dining room?

When he finally caught up with her, he stepped forward and took hold of her hand. He didn't put his arms around her, he didn't say a word, he simply took her by the hand and, turning about, led her to a safe place.

They zigzagged across the checkerboard that the shapes of lighted windows marked out on the grass, keeping to the darkened squares.

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They walked quickly, almost running. Kohoutek's current woman was finding the going more and more difficult, and she was panting ever more hoarsely. Kohoutek did not take the backpack from her back, nor did he help her with the suitcase; in the desperation that had taken hold of him, he dragged her along behind him, tugging at her hand and over and over again squeezing her fingers painfully. All this he did partly unconsciously, and yet partly on purpose, to punish her for the problems she had caused him by her outrageous arrival.

We old libertines, laughing as we observe this scene, yet filled with dread from a peculiar kind of sympathy, might add that Kohoutek's anger and desperation were undergirded by a rational cunning. Kohoutek was well aware that by hurrying to the aid of his current woman, he was, when it came down to it, increasing the risk and rendering the situation even more dramatic. Because now someone might not only see his current woman on the lawn; they might equally well spot Kohoutek himself at her side. What was more, someone might also notice Kohoutek's absence from the house. At any moment a cry might go up: Kohoutek, where are you? Kohoutek's mother, for instance, seeing Kohoutek's cap in the hallway, might assume that recklessly as usual, as usual goodness knows why, Kohoutek had rushed out without his cap, and so she might, taking the cap with her, set off after Kohoutek; a thousand courses of events of this kind might take place. But there was one chance in a thousand that nothing would happen. And besides, let's be honest, despite the unpropitious circumstances, Kohoutek was glad to see his current woman. He touched her and the same thing happened to him that always happened when he touched her. At such times Kohoutek was reduced to his own hands. Whenever he touched her, his whole existence was concentrated into his hands. Now especially, it can be said that as Kohoutek feverishly squeezed his current woman's hand, he was literally bearing his whole fate in the convulsive grip of his fingers.

He pulled her toward the old slaughterhouse. Kohoutek's current woman saw before her a thicket so dense that it looked to her like a dark mound, a tangle of fir, hazel, burdock, and sugar cane, an impassable barrier. But Kohoutek led her along a sort of path, and after a moment crumbling white walls began to appear through the vegetation. The door opened noiselessly and the lovers stepped into safe territory. Here, amid slaughterhouse machinery that was rusting like a seasonal monument, no pursuers should catch them. Nevertheless, Kohoutek was still uneasy.

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"We're going upstairs," he said and finally took the suitcase from the hands of his utterly exhausted current woman. "It's quite a weight," he growled reproachfully, and led the way up the wooden stairs.

When his current woman found herself in the attic, to begin with she could not comprehend what world she had come to. Kohoutek, though he had told her everything, never mentioned that his family had since time immemorial been in the habit of collecting basic forms of packing. First they amassed cardboard boxes; later came the plastic bag period. There had also been a time of collecting paper sacks from sugar, flour, and rice, though rice was rarely used in Lutheran cooking.

Truly cubist expanses extended before the eyes of Kohoutek's current woman. Who thought up the first cardboard container in the world? Who was the creator of the first box? Certainly there must exist encyclopedists who know the dates and names of these inventors. Certainly, too, on the second floor of that old slaughterhouse there could be found at least one box from the very first series. In any case there were containers from before the war with labels still legible: "Pawel Molin of Cieszyn: Groceries, Agricultural Supplies, and Building Materials," "Ryszard Ploszka's Bookstore and Stationer's, Jablonków," "Scharbert's Department Store, Ustroń," "Fussek and Sons Glassware, China, and Haberdashery," "Amsterdam Brothers of Český Těšín, Woven Goods and Silk Stockings."

There were towering piles of German boxes with Gothic hieroglyphs that Kohoutek's current woman was unable to decipher, bulky cubes marked UNRRA, countless numbers of ordinary brown receptacles which had once been used to pack Christmas presents or prison parcels, boxes that had at one time contained apples or fragile crockery, boxes that smelled of naphthalene, gray soap, or tobacco. Boxes that to this day retained the smell of the fifties, the scent of the first oranges and the first lemons. Boxes that came from unspecified periods and were covered in dust and spiders' webs.

Kohoutek's current woman's first reaction was to think that Kohoutek had led her to this container graveyard in order to tidy it up a little. For Kohoutek had in fact thrown himself upon the cardboard pyramids with a singular zeal and had begun to toss them from one place to another. And Kohoutek's current woman was familiar with Kohoutek's fears and habits, and knew that the principle had been drilled into him that everything in life had to be earned by superhuman exertion in inhuman conditions. She imagined to herself, then, that Kohoutek was attempting to deserve her arrival, to be worthy of her presence by the superhuman exertion of tidying up the attic of the old slaugh-

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terhouse. When they had finished, when all the boxes had been properly stacked and sorted, they would go downstairs, cross the lawn, boldly enter the dining room, and Kohoutek would announce emphatically:

"Mother, father, wife, and all you dear members of the household, this is my current woman, with whom I have tidied the attic. Goddammit, someone had to get around to it."

"Amazing," Oma, Kohoutek's grandmother, would reply, her voice filled with incredulous admiration. "The two of you tidied the attic all on your own? It must have cost you an inhuman effort!"

The other members of the household would in silent approbation make room for them at the table, and the unexpected arrival of Kohoutek's current woman would be legalized by means of the ethos of superhuman exertion in inhuman conditions that had been lovingly cultivated in Kohoutek's family. But this was merely a daydream that passed through the head of Kohoutek's current woman, which was filled with the world of books. For he was grubbing around amongst the cardboard boxes not to tidy them up, but in order to construct for her some kind of shelter or den.

Behold, my man is building a house in which we shall grow old together, thought Kohoutek's current woman, virtually without a hint of irony.

Kohoutek, in the meantime, was indeed laying down foundations and putting up walls. He worked with astonishing proficiency. In all probability, fear and panic had stirred in him the inspiration characteristic of great builders. In any case he gave the impression of being an experienced constructor of makeshift sleeping-quarters. Once the bed was ready, he even fashioned over it something like a canopy, which in fact also had a practical purpose, since over the piles of boxes there was nothing but a crumbling ridge roof. For a moment Kohoutek thought about covering the provisional awning with plastic bags, but plastic bags were stored in the laundry room, and an expedition to fetch them entailed additional perils. Besides, even though the laundry room contained several thousand plastic bags at the very least, Kohoutek's mother was bound to notice if even a handful went missing. These days, now that the country had liberated itself from the Muscovite yoke and in almost every store purchases were wrapped in what were once priceless plastic sacks, Kohoutek's mother dropped by the laundry virtually every day to deposit a carefully folded new addition, and she was fully cognizant of the size of her collection. Here, on the other hand, in the loft of the old slaughterhouse, it was safe. In any case, no one had looked in here for ages. It had been ten years since the last cardboard boxes had been deposited.

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In those days European Lutherans used to send donations in them—coffee, tea, chocolate, shampoo, and washing powder—though, strange to relate, the smell had completely evaporated from those latest boxes. They didn't smell of martial law. They smelled of nothingness.

Kohoutek worked without a break and didn't say a word. His current woman sat on the suitcase, smoked a cigarette, and was silent too. Only when he had finished did he straighten up, wipe the sweat from his brow and ask:

"When did you arrive?"

"Now," Kohoutek's current woman replied.

• • •

"IT'S HIGH TIME we gave some serious thought to taking in lodgers," said Kohoutek over supper in a voice trembling with anxiety. "Winter's on its way; there'll be crowds of skiers, quite a few of whom will be looking for somewhere to stay, and there's no lack of empty rooms here."

"That's right." Kohoutek unexpectedly found the Postmaster, Kohoutek's grandfather, taking his side. "Young folk will be coming into town, and young folk should be given support, because they are our future."

"If we were to let a room to someone nice"—Oma, Kohoutek's grandmother, was sipping at a cup of tea—"then at least there'd be someone to talk to around here."

"Well, you can just kill me"—Kohoutek's mother was as white as a sheet—"kill me and bury me, and if not then I'll kill all of you. Don't you know what it means to let a stranger into the house?"

"What does it mean?" asked Kohoutek, taken aback by his own courage.

"What does it mean? It means the end. Sit up straight, sit up straight; if someone sees you slouching like that then you've had it. Letting a stranger into the house means annihilation for every one of us."

"He'll keep turning on the light"—Miss Wandzia's mother spat out the litany of crimes hatefully, word by word—"He'll make food, he'll wash in the bathroom, he'll use the toilet. . . ."

"Isn't it better"—Oma broke off a piece of shortcake and dipped it in her tea—"Isn't it better that he should turn on the light and use the toilet, rather than relieving himself in a corner with the light off?"

"Sure it's better!" Kohoutek's mother spoke so quietly it seemed that at any moment now she'd pass out with rage. "Sure it's better! Sure, just

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what I need is for someone to make a mess in the bathroom or the toilet, all day long, woman, clean up after some filthy stranger, and at night don't fall asleep for a second, because you never know if he won't come and murder every last one of us."

"There's no denying it"—Kohoutek's father strove to lend his voice an extraordinarily commonsensical tone—"there's no denying it, you never can tell who you let in under your own roof. Myself, for instance, if I saw some bum lazing around the house till midday, I'd kill him on the spot."

"There you are, if you want Dudús to spend the rest of his life"—Kohoutek's mother threw everything into the balance—"if you want Dudús to spend the rest of his life behind bars, be my guest, rent out rooms."

"That's right," Kohoutek's father said forcefully. "I'd do time, but I'd kill that bum on the spot."

"You're all heartless," Kohoutek's mother began to weep, "if you're trying to throw me out of the house, but go ahead, rent out my room, I'll move out right away, I'll pack my things right away; but I beg you, I beg you, just let me finish my last supper. Don't be so pleased, Dudús"—she turned to Kohoutek's father—"don't be so pleased about killing him, it would be him who'd kill you, but for them it means nothing to rent out a room to a murderer."

"Tough," said Kohoutek's father. "It's him or me."

"Or maybe"—Kohoutek's wife retained a studied calm, and consequently tried not to look in the direction of her desperate husband—"we could let a room to some stylish, well-groomed lady?"

"Or maybe," Kohoutek's mother aped her, "we should just hang a red light over the door and have done with it? How do you like that—in one room the Rostov Vampire, in another the whore of Babylon."

"The Rostov Vampire was caught by the police." Kohoutek was truly in despair; he was kicking himself for setting in motion this discussion, which was clearly leading to a disastrous conclusion.

"So what?" Kohoutek's mother's surprise was virtually authentic.

"So," the Postmaster, Kohoutek's grandfather, helped him out with a reply, "it's rather unlikely that some guy locked up in a Russian slammer would come here on a skiing trip and rent a room at the Kohoutek house."

"Don't be angry, father, but you're just like a little child. How do you know that the person who knocks at our door to ask for a room isn't a serial killer? What do you think, that he'll introduce himself to you: 'Good morning, Postmaster, I'm a degenerate, can I have a room?' Or

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maybe you think that he'll show you his ID card, and in the place marked 'Occupation' it'll say: 'woman-killer'? No; he'll come in the night and murder you." The compassion with which Kohoutek's mother spoke was boundless.

"Why would he kill me?" the Postmaster, Kohoutek's grandfather, defended himself. "I'm not a woman."

"I know," Kohoutek's mother said slowly and almost calmly, "I know that you're all thinking about me, and that you can't wait for me to die."

"Please don't get upset." The pastor's wife had been silent up to this point, sitting motionless with her head bowed and her gaze fixed on her empty plate; now, however, she sat up straight and sparks danced in her handsome eyes. "Please don't get upset; no one wants you dead or wishes you any harm."

"I know, I know," twittered Kohoutek's mother, "you and your husband don't wish me anything bad; but how can a stranger be let into the house without a second thought?"

"Now you've made your mother cry!" roared Kohoutek's father all of a sudden. "Your mother's weeping because of you; do I really have to kill you to stop you doing that again? Do it one more time," he added more quietly, "and it'll be your head I come after."

"Don't you raise your hand to him, Dudús." Out of the blue Kohoutek's mother came to his defense. "You know how long it took him to get over the scarlet fever."

Translated from the Polish by Bill Johnston

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EUGENE DUBNOV

At the Bathing-Pool

ORLIK—THAT'S WHAT they called Kolka Orlov at school—wasn't liked. He was the only one in the whole school who lived in that block of luxury flats on the corner of Petrovsky Park which was close to the school itself. Occasionally he would invite Yura to visit him, and Yura felt shy on entering the vast apartment with parquet flooring. Because of this flooring you had to take your shoes off at the door before you went in and put on a pair of slippers which was there specifically for that purpose. Yura had only seen Orlik's father once—and even then not in this grand flat, but at a distance, when he was waiting for his son opposite the school. On that occasion Orlik had said in a loud whisper to Yura at the end of the last period, "You must excuse me, Dad is waiting"—for all the world as if Yura had any need of him—and then he put up his hand.

"Do you want to answer the question, Orlov?" The teacher was surprised. "All right then—in what way did Vladimir Ilyich develop Marx and Engels?"

"I can't say but my dad is waiting," Orlik announced. "Today at the Young Pioneers Palace they're holding an evening event—invitation only—for the coming generation to meet the veterans, and we've been invited. Things start early, at six, and before that we've got to go to the members-only gymnasium."

But that ploy didn't work with the teacher.

"When the lesson's over—and not a moment before—you will go to this members-only gymnasium, Orlov," she said, and Orlik sat down to the accompaniment of a little gloating laugh from the class. It was then, coming out of school with him, that Yura caught a glimpse of Orlik's father standing by the newspaper kiosk over the road. He was a tall and portly man, wearing a fur coat fit for a nobleman and an Astrakhan hat, but Yura could not make out his face from where he was. However, as far as Orlik's mother, Klavdiya Ivanovna, was concerned, Yura had had the luck to see her at close quarters—not only to see her but to hear her too. That was when, addressing him for some reason as Seryozha, she had explained to him how one ought to read a book without dirtying it or losing it. Yura had planned to borrow *Huckleberry Finn* and *Treasure Island* from Orlik; but after all his mother's warnings Yura changed his

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mind and said he would borrow the books some other time. This other time never came because he stopped going to their apartment, with its parquet and its slippers, in that luxury block dignified by a grand spiral staircase and crowned by a glass dome.

As for Yura himself, he lived with his parents and his sister in two poky rooms in a communal flat. The furniture in the rooms was old and broken-down, the wallpaper peeling, and in winter there were drafts from under the windows.

Yura wasn't exactly friends with Orlik, but he didn't avoid his company the way the other boys did. He liked to watch Orlik mimic their teachers and their classmates. Orlik had a real actor's gift, and Yura had advised him to go on, after he graduated from the eighth form, to acting school. But Orlik said he would follow in his father's footsteps and become a Party functionary in the Latvian Communist Party Central Committee, with his own office, his own car, and his own chauffeur. "And with my own secretary," he giggled gleefully, winking at Yura, imitating a female walk by wiggling his hips, and drawing round shapes in the air in front of his chest.

Thanks to his talent for acting Orlik even succeeded for a time in becoming popular in his class. This happened after the release of the film *An Optimistic Tragedy*. Most of the students had gone to see it, and they all burst out laughing (the girls blushing a little) when Orlik acted out two short scenes from the film, showing the anarchist sailor and Alexei. In one of the scenes a female commissar arrives on a ship of the Baltic fleet to restore order among the sailors, and the anarchist sailor wants to rape her in full view of everybody and with their wholehearted consent. First of all he puts his arms around her from behind and, curving his whole body over her, breaks into the old romantic ballad "Under the fragrant lilac bough." Later on, when he starts making even more of a nuisance of himself, she shoots him dead. After that all of them leave her alone and even begin to respect her—including Alexei, the main hero. But at the beginning he too had been treating her as something of a joke, and Orlik really outdid himself in that bit where Alexei says: "Let us get married, comrade: we'll continue our family line—and have some fun too!"

And now once again, no sooner had Yura come up to him than Orlik spread his arms wide, as if to embrace him, and launched into his star turn, leering at Yura when he came to the word "fun" and milking it for all it was worth. Yura could not resist and burst out laughing, even though he had seen Orlik in this role many times before.

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He also laughed because he was glad for him. Yura was probably the only one in the class who had not gloated yesterday when their teacher had said that the higher a man soars the harder he falls—and asked Orlik to explain. Orlik went terribly red and started to mumble something, and after the bell almost all the class, having guessed what had happened, began to rag him. They drove him into such a state that he ran home before classes were over. Immediately after school, he had rung Yura up and suggested that they meet, as usual, by Peter the Great's oak in Petrovsky Park.

It turned out that Orlik's father had been removed from his post—that same mysteriously exalted post which he had occupied for so many years—and transferred to a much, much lower one. On account of this the grand celebrations planned for Orlik's fifteenth birthday had been cancelled. When Orlik informed the teacher, who had already been invited, he had been imprudent enough to confide in her and to explain that his birthday party had been cancelled because his father had been sacked. Yura was nettled by the fact that he himself had not been invited to the party, but he immediately forgot his annoyance when he heard how unjustly the powers that be had treated Orlik's father.

"You see, the Latvians disliked him right from the start, because he is a Russian, and began to undermine his position," Orlik complained. "They simply hate Russians. And so they slandered Dad for supposedly feathering his own nest—which I bet they'd been doing themselves. So they pulled the wool over the ever-vigilant eyes of the Party, and it has victimized an innocent man. Well, just you wait—our time will come, and we'll show them! Dad will go to Moscow soon, and then the truth will out!"

But now when the two of them met at the No. 11 tram stop to go to the lido on Kish Lake in Mezhapark (for it was closer and cheaper to get to than the beach), Orlik seemed to have completely forgotten his father's misfortunes and his own thirst for revenge. Yura was at first happy to see Orlik in his usual exuberant mood, and did not immediately understand why his friend had forgotten his family tragedy. But the reason became clear soon enough: in the tram Orlik never stopped talking about an embarrassing incident which had taken place that morning in school. Standing by the window in the corridor, he had been for the umpteenth time enacting, for the benefit of the boys from his own class and the adjoining A-section, some small scenes from that same film they all liked so much. And everybody was so excited that no one noticed Pickled Newts, their biology teacher, on her way to their classroom to begin a new lesson. By the time somebody spotted her and whispered

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loudly, "Cave—nix!" it was already too late. Orlik had had time to finish his piece, and it was clear from the way the Newts had gone bright pink that she had seen and heard everything. It would be impossible to imagine a less suitable audience for this kind of joke: young, fresh from from Training College, she blushed when the class clowns asked her to explain the role of the male and female organs in the fertilization of plants. Orlik, whose stock only yesterday had fallen so low that it would be impossible for it to be any lower, today felt he was the hero of the hour again. He kept asking Yura whether he had noticed just how embarrassed and confused the Newts had looked—and how she had nearly burst into tears when Zavadsky had asked her about the function of the stamens and pistils. Even after they had arrived at Kish Lake, gotten as far as the lido, and changed, Orlik was still asking Yura: "But did you notice the way she literally ran out of the classroom as soon as the bell rang, clutching her handkerchief?"

Orlik could not swim, and because of that was afraid to venture too far into the water. Yura realized this right away, although Orlik kept on saying that the further you went the chillier the water was and anyway he had a cold coming on. When they reached the slide, where the water only came up as far as your armpits, he finally turned back. Yura started climbing the stairs of the slide. Two girls were going up in front of him, talking in Latvian. They must have been three or four years older than Yura. The one who was in front was rather plain, short, and with somewhat horsey teeth. But her friend looked like a real beauty: tall, slender, with brown eyes and long chestnut tresses. As he waited for her to go down and prepared to follow her, Yura noticed a fellow standing at the foot of the slide. Grasping the slide's rim, he floated on the water and watched the bathers as they mounted to the top platform and glided down the slide. He looked about twenty-five. Yura didn't care much for his face: it was a heavy-jowled, unpleasant one.

Having rushed into the water and then come out, Yura noticed him again: this time he was not looking up, but past Yura, at the circular ripples spreading on the surface of the bathing-pool from the point where it was already becoming paler and pinker. As soon as the more attractive of the two girls emerged, the unpleasant-looking young man swam towards her. By the time they were joined by her friend (who had emerged earlier but further away), Jowls—so Yura nicknamed him in his mind—was already chatting her up. Russian was evidently Jowls's mother tongue, but the girl had a strongish Latvian accent. Her plain friend quickly realized that she was in the way and went off to do her

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dog paddle somewhere else. Yura also went away—to be more precise, went back to go down the slide once again.

When he surfaced, the pretty Latvian and Jowls were no longer to be seen. But soon enough he came upon them once more, when he had gone deeper into the pool where the water reached his chin in order to do the crawl, which he preferred to all other swimming styles.

Jowls was already teaching the girl to swim, helping her to lie on her stomach and supporting her while she kicked out her legs on the surface of the bathing-pool and shoveled the water underneath herself. At first he helped her to float by supporting her with both hands at her stomach and at her back. But then, before Yura's very eyes, his right hand glided up along her stomach and his left hand went down her back—and now he was supporting her from below, under the top of her bathing costume, while stroking the hollow between her back and her buttocks.

Yura indignantly and impatiently waited for her to lose her temper, as he already had, and to dismiss Jowls, but such hopes were destined to be disappointed. The girl seemed scarcely to have noticed that she was being clutched by her breasts and that somebody was stroking her backside. She continued floating as if nothing had happened, chattering happily with Jowls (Yura could not hear what they were talking about, as they a few yards away, but there could be no mistaking the tone).

Yura was so absorbed in these happenings that he hadn't even noticed they had been surrounded. To be exact, only Jowls and the Latvian girl had been surrounded: Yura remained outside the circle. Jowls and the girl were ringed round by some half-dozen young fellows of roughly the same age as Jowls. Their leader, a shortish swarthy fellow (whom Yura mentally nicknamed Gippo) didn't even bother to notice Jowls—heading straight for the girl, he just threw at him a peremptory "Out of my way!" (Yura, intrigued by what was going on, had, unobserved, come up closer where he could see and hear practically everything, while sensibly remaining outside the circle.)

Gippo had come really close to the girl, who was no longer dog-paddling but standing on her feet with a frightened look on her now-pale face.

"Please," she begged Jowls, almost sobbing, "please, take me away from here, I'll go with you where you wanted me to go, I'll do anything, please—please!"

But he was already at a respectable distance from her, with a servile smirk on his fat face. His whole expression showed just how well he had understood Gippo's command, and how from now on he would claim no connection with the girl at all.

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The circle of Gippo's mates, inside which these events were taking place, was contracting—and now the distance from the center where Gippo was standing with the Latvian girl to his friends who were closing in was no more than three or four yards. Gippo was now standing not merely near her but, as it seemed to Yura, a bit too close, while his gang continued to hem them in. The girl was on the verge of losing her self-control. There were tears not only in her voice now, but real tears on her cheeks. She spoke rapidly and confusedly, addressing now Jowls and now Gippo: "Don't, please, don't, I'll go with you, help me, let me go, please, don't do it, please!"

Nobody answered, and Jowls went on smirking.

Suddenly Yura heard a strong masculine voice, effortlessly resounding across the water.

"What are you up to over there? Why are you pestering that girl? Leave her alone at once! Let the girl be!"

Yura turned round. Behind him, at a distance of some six or seven yards, two middle-aged men were standing, broad-shouldered, muscular, with the even tan of athletes. They were evidently together.

Gippo seemed to hesitate over what to do, but the ring of his cronies was already breaking up. They started splashing the girl, as if it had all been just good fun.

White as a sheet, the girl walked past Yura through a gap in the circle. Somehow Yura did not feel like staying there alone with Gippo and his gang and with Jowls, so he followed the Latvian girl.

On her way to the shore she encountered her friend.

"Hurry up, let's go!" she said without pausing, quickly and plaintively. "You don't know what happened just a few seconds ago—those men over there—"

Disbelief showed on her friend's face.

"Surely you're exaggerating," she said as she reluctantly followed her to the shore. "You're imagining things—I saw for myself how they were fooling about and splashing you with water."

"I swear it's true. . .you've no idea. . . ." the first girl kept repeating disjointedly, coming out of the pool.

Orlik was also on the shore waiting for Yura.

"Let's go home," Yura said.

"So soon?" Orlik was surprised. "Let's at least sunbathe for a bit."

Without answering, Yura went to the changing rooms, and Orlik, with a shrug of his shoulders, followed.

"What's up?" he asked, but Yura gave an evasive answer.

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Going home on the No. 11 tram, attempting to entertain his friend, Orlik once again acted out one of his little scenes from *An Optimistic Tragedy*.

"Let us get married, comrade!" he entered into the part with particular inspiration. "We'll continue our family line and. . .(here he paused and winked at Yura in a conspiratorial way) have some fun too!"

Seeing that Yura was not reacting, he tried his second part.

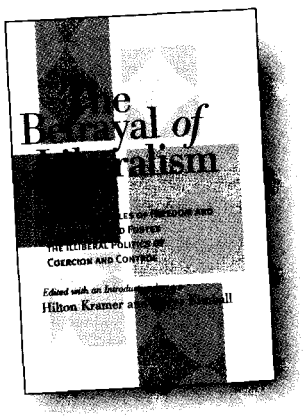
"Under the fragrant lilac bough," he sang, putting on a lecherous act, standing on tiptoe and spreading out his arms like a parasol over Yura and wiggling his whole body. He wasn't even put off by a few passengers who were giving them odd looks.

"Cut it out, leave me alone!" Yura could not help bursting out, but immediately stopped himself realizing that he might have offended the fellow needlessly.

"Sorry," he said in a different, gentler tone of voice. "I'm just in a bad mood. Don't take it to heart."

After a momentary hesitation he added: "And as for your dad—I'm sure things will turn out all right."

Translated from Russian by the author and John Heath-Stubbs



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EUGENE GOODHEART

Marshall McLuhan Revisited

While preparing this essay, I asked a number of graduate students in their late twenties and early thirties whether they knew who Marshall McLuhan was. Most of them had never even heard of him; one or two had the vague sense that he had written about the media; a few remembered his cameo appearance in Woody Allen's *Annie Hall*. They had heard the phrase, "the medium is the message," and its variation, "the medium is the massage," but had not heard of the author. Marshall McLuhan, prophet of the technological revolution that absorbs the generation presently in their teens, twenties, and thirties, has virtually disappeared from view—or at least from their view. For those who grew up with an awareness of his iconic status in the sixties and the seventies, McLuhan is still a point of reference. No longer front and center, he remains a figure in the background of our awareness of the cultural scene. The advent of television, the presence and power of the media, our increasingly global existence: all have associations with McLuhan's work.

The vicissitudes of reputation don't have a single explanation. Times change and a writer may no longer speak to the times. Or, the work may continue to have relevance, but attention may be drawn elsewhere. A reputation can rise and fall and rise again. It is of course possible that a body of work once regarded with universal interest does not survive scrutiny years later. McLuhan's work did arouse universal interest in the sixties and the seventies, though much of it was hostile to his achievement. In his unsympathetic treatment of McLuhan in the *Modern Masters* series (1971), Jonathan Miller notes the paradox of McLuhan's reputation at the time of Miller's writing: "It has sometimes been said that Marshall McLuhan's most impressive achievement is his reputation; but though most people are familiar with his name, and some know his more dramatic mottoes, only a small section of the reading public is directly acquainted with the main body of his characteristic ideas." And the paradox is enforced by the fact that a book devoted to a "modern master" demolishes his claim to mastery.

How are we to judge McLuhan's achievement two decades after his death? His three most important books are *The Mechanical Bride* (1951), *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962) and, most famously, *Understanding*

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Media (1965). I don't recall having read them through when they came out, but I do recall the excitement that McLuhan generated as a presence on the cultural scene. There was a sense that his charisma exceeded his achievement in print—a fitting coincidence, since McLuhan presented himself as a critic of the limitations of print culture. Having read the books with some care in recent months, I can occasionally glimpse the reasons for the excitement at the same time that I share the disappointment many of McLuhan's most astute readers felt.

His liveliest and best book, in my view, is *The Mechanical Bride* (1951), a tour de force survey of the advertising culture of the time, in which he displays an uncanny instinct for the movements of the *Zeitgeist*, written in language that crackles with a quirky energy. Like Roland Barthes's *Mythologies*, it is filled with sharp satiric *aperçus* about commercial culture, many of them striking and even original for their time, some of which have retained their freshness; others have become the common coin of the realm, and still others now seem hyperbolic and not always convincing.

An ad for Lysol, accompanied by an illustration of a young woman immersed in the water of "doubt, inhibitions, ignorance, misgivings," with arms raised and "crying out in anguish," elicits the comment: "Closely related to the combination of moral fervor and knowledge is the cult of hygiene. If it is a duty to buy those appliances which free the body from toil and thus enable housewives not to hate their husbands, equally urgent is the duty 'to be dainty and fresh.'" (McLuhan fails to note the subtext: it is a subliminal ad for contraception. Perhaps he noted it, but couldn't say it in 1951.) An ad for a 1949 Buick Roadmaster entitled "Ready, Willing and Waiting" draws the obvious rhetorical question: "Has the car taken up the burden of sex in an increasingly neuter world?" Superman represents

> the psychological defeat of technological man. As a third-rate reporter whose incompetence wins him the pity and contempt of the virile Lois Lane, his hidden superself is an adolescent dream of imaginary triumphs. While Clark Kent can't win even the admiration of Lois Lane, Superman is besieged by clamorous viragos. Superman accepts a self-imposed celibacy with the resignation of a stamping forge, while Kent is merely resigned.

This is McLuhan at his counter-intuitive best. The virile female and the emasculated male also appear in his treatment of Blondie ("She has 'poise and confidence,' know-how and drive") and Dagwood ("a supernumerary

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tooth with weak hams and a cuckold hairdo"). In his turn on Sherlock Holmes and "the sleuth cult," McLuhan hyperbolically sees a "foreshadowing of the police state."

Like Barthes, McLuhan is a demystifier who takes pleasure in the mystifications of popular culture. You get the feeling from the wit and vividness of his language that he relishes the ads and comic strips that provide him with the lowdown of what our culture is really about. His severest strictures are reserved for the great books and great ideas of academic culture—particular targets being Robert Hutchins and Mortimer Adler of the University of Chicago. *The Mechanical Bride* features a photograph of Adler and associates grouped around a display of great ideas written on cards and alphabetized ("angel," "animal," "aristocracy," "art"—all the way to "wealth" and "will": *x*, *y*, and *z* apparently don't qualify for greatness) as if they were tombstones in a cemetery of ideas. McLuhan is bothered by Hutchins's defeatist attitude toward mass culture. He quotes Hutchins: "But to hope that even the best training in criticism can cope with the constant storm of triviality and propaganda that now beats upon the citizen seems to me to expect too much of any educational system." McLuhan comments: "Why has it not occurred to Dr. Hutchins that the only practical answer to the 'storm of triviality and propaganda' is that it be brought under control by being inspected? Its baneful effects are at present entirely dependent on its being ignored." This is a refrain that runs through all of McLuhan's work.

He means to defend the great books in his criticism of Hutchins and Adler, and of what he calls "the little magazine culture."

> To win more and more attention for the best work it is necessary to demonstrate what constitutes the second-rate, third-rate and so on . . . .The air of unreality which has hovered over the little magazine culture in general is due to their neglect of the close interrelations between the good and bad work of the period. The result of this neglect is, finally, failure to see the goodness of the work itself. The great artist necessarily has his roots very deep in his own time, roots which embrace the most vulgar and commonplace fantasies and aspirations.

Pierre Bourdieu has recently made a similar argument: we can understand the distinction of the authors who have survived by studying "the universe of contemporaries with whom and against whom they have

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constructed themselves," which means "rehabilitating second-rate authors."

You may not like popular culture, you may fear its effects, but if you want not to be victimized by it, you'd better understand how it works. So we need to ask how McLuhan understands popular culture and how this understanding leads to the control he desires. If one looks for a clear exposition of ideas in his work, one is bound to be disappointed. He prefers what he calls "probes" to sustained exposition and argument, the probes being held together by overarching themes or by a narrative statement. In *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, the history of culture in its broadest outline is a movement from oral culture to print and finally to our electronic culture. Oral culture synthesizes the senses, print separates them, giving pride of place to the visual sense, and the electronic restores the unity of the senses. The Christian narrative of paradise lost and regained is close to the surface of McLuhan's thought (he remained a good Catholic throughout his life), as is T. S. Eliot's literary myth of the dissociation of sensibility. Before Gutenberg, culture was an organic whole: vision, sound, and touch were interdependent, thought and feeling inseparable. Print with its "lineality" catastrophically separated the senses, subordinating the auditory-tactile to the visual. One effect of print is point of view ("equitone prose"), a cultural misfortune in McLuhan's opinion, which his prose (to the discomfort of his readers) tries to overcome. The social effect of print culture is detribalization and the emergence of nationalism, an effect asserted without argument or evidence. According to McLuhan, we have now entered a new phase: the retribalization of culture into a global village through electronic technology. The romantic longing for organic unity paradoxically finds its satisfaction in our experience of electronic media. All the significant changes that have occurred in culture are the result of technological changes in the media. McLuhan can be fairly called a media determinist.

His style is intimidating. He doesn't argue his case; rather, he hammers it home through reiteration supported by long quotations (whose relevance is not always clear) from virtually every major writer of the Western tradition (Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Ramus, Shakespeare, Durkheim, Weber, Freud, and Spengler, to name a few) and a host of minor writers. McLuhan's self-described "mosaic" style is supposed to provide an antidote to the lineality of the book, the medium in which he is compelled to express himself. McLuhan has denied from time to time that he views the book (the consummate expression of print culture) as a misfortune. After all, he reads omnivorously and writes

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prolifically. Then where does he stand on the matter of print culture? But that is a question of point of view, and McLuhan, in the spirit of his animus against what he believes to be a feature of print culture, resists being pinned down. "The theme of [*The Gutenberg Galaxy*] is not that there is anything good or bad about print but that unconsciousness of the effect of *any* force is a disaster, especially a force that we have made ourselves."

This is a version of the statement that we have already encountered in *The Mechanical Bride*: we cannot presume to control the effects of mass culture if we don't learn its ways. A laudable aim, but nowhere in McLuhan's work is there the slightest hint of how understanding leads to control. What we get is an account of our media fate, but not of how to master it. McLuhan seems to subscribe to the Hegelian definition of freedom as the recognition of necessity.

> Is it not possible to emancipate ourselves from the subliminal operation of our own technologies? Is not the essence of education civil defense against media fall-out? Since the effort has never been made in any culture the answer may seem to lie in doubt. There may be some hitherto unsuspected and wise motive for mental sleep and self-hypnosis in man which the confrontation of the effects of the media technology would reveal.

McLuhan's questions provoke questions. First there is the matter of his contested understanding of the changing technology of the media and the effect of that technology on the sensorium. Is it true that print culture separates the senses, and, in giving primacy to the visual sense, allows the other senses to atrophy? In his little book on McLuhan, Jonathan Miller, a trained neurologist, deftly exposes his understanding of the sensorium. Miller's demonstration is too extensive and complex for summary. Here is an example. "[McLuhan] speaks. . .about print 'stepping up the intensity of vision,' which is not wrong exactly but meaningless. For vision is not the sort of 'thing' to which the concept of intensity can be significantly applied. One may talk about the intensity of a visual *stimulus*—but it makes no sense to talk about the intensity of vision." Miller then provides a technical account of how "the intensity of a spot of light" is a function of stimulus and not of vision. Miller also refutes McLuhan's claim that "the mind becomes biased by undue emphasis applied to one particular sense" by showing that it is "cognitive interest [that] determines the use to which the various senses will be put, not vice versa." It is not enough to make an effort to understand;

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one must achieve understanding. McLuhan's insistence that electronic culture restores the unity of the senses becomes a refrain unsupported by evidence.

But supposing for the sake of argument that he truly understands the history of the media, what should or can be done about it? If the electronic media are replacing print culture, isn't the remedy for what ails us in print culture already in place? No longer will the auditory and tactile senses be subordinated to the visual. We may no longer be required to understand the media or do anything about it. The matter is not so clear, however, for McLuhan is equivocal about the respective advantages and disadvantages of print and electronic media. He resists the idea that only bad things issue from print culture, but he refuses to say "that there is anything good or bad about print culture." I suspect that this moral neutrality disguises uncertainty about the relative advantages and disadvantages of print and electronic culture. "Any invention or technology is an extension or self-amputation of our physical bodies, and such extension also demands new ratios or new equilibriums, among the other organs and extensions of the body." Translation: technological change has benefits and costs to our well-being. We are not provided, however, with a cost-benefit analysis.

In his overall argument, electronic culture seems like the consummation for which McLuhan, an avatar of the current breed of professional champions of our pop culture, devoutly wishes. Murray Siskind, the charismatic college instructor in DeLillo's *White Noise*, speaks McLuhanism when he affirms the codes and messages of our media-dominated culture.

> TV is a problem only if you've forgotten how to look and listen. . . . My students and I discuss this all the time. They're beginning to feel they ought to turn against the medium, exactly as an earlier generation turned against their parents and their country. I tell them they have to learn to look as children again. Root out content. Find the codes and messages.

And yet while watching television, McLuhan bursts out: "Do you really want to know what I think of that thing? If you want to save one shred of Hebrao-Greco-Roman-Enlightenment-Modern-Western Civilization you better get an axe and smash all sets." What can such an outburst mean for his understanding of the media? McLuhan tells us again and again that print is a "hot" medium that renders the reader passive, whereas TV is a "cool" medium in which the spectator becomes actively

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and fully involved—a desirable situation. (Counterintuitively, McLuhan views reading as a passive experience and watching television as actively involving all the senses.) Why then does he vent his spleen on television? Could it be that he is appalled by the content of its programs, despite his insistence that content is an irrelevance in our experience of TV? "The medium is the message." Smashing the set with an axe is hardly the act you expect to follow from an *understanding* of the medium. In a less excited mood, he makes a more reasonable suggestion: "To resist TV. . .one must acquire the antidote of related media like print." So after all that he has said about the fragmenting of the sensibility by print, it remains an agent for saving civilization from electronic barbarism.

McLuhan and his defenders don't feel obliged to be consistent. Consistency of point of view or of argument is a function of print culture, which it is McLuhan's task to overcome. An admirer, Samuel Becker, advises us not "to respond to McLuhan's work as though it is a scientific research, historical or anthropological observation, or even serious criticism, [but rather] to respond to it as the object it most closely approximates—a projective test. We ought not to read it for what it or McLuhan means, but rather for its help on loosening our imaginations, for stimulating us to think about communication in fresh and imaginative ways, for causing us to dredge up out of the very recesses of our own minds the ideas which are lurking there." In other words, McLuhan is himself a cool medium like television in which we find what we want to find. He is the forerunner of a radical reader-centered criticism in which the reader in effect constitutes the text. If his work is intended as a sort of Rorschach, then it is disingenuous for him and his defenders to assert again and again, as they do, that he has been misunderstood by his critics. Misunderstanding implies the possibility of a true understanding of an author's intention. But McLuhan and his cool electronic culture have effectively undermined the whole idea of authorship and authorial intention. Post-print media, in this view, are now the possession of active readers and spectators.

"The medium is the message" is McLuhan's application of the formalism of Eliot and Joyce to the products of popular culture. "Our conventional response to all media, namely that it is how they are used that counts, is the numb stance of the technological idiot. For the 'content' of a medium is like the juicy piece of meat carried by the burglar to distract the watchdog of the mind." McLuhan "burglarizes" Eliot's metaphor for the effect of the content of a poem on the mind of the reader. But what does it mean to ignore content in responding to the

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medium? We can only guess from his examples. His readings of "the folklore of industrial culture," the subtitle of *The Mechanical Bride*, follow an established model of demystification—in Freud's terms, revealing the latent content hidden in the manifest content. The automobile has "taken up the burden of sex." Superman is "the adolescent dream of imaginary triumphs," a compensation for impotence. Dagwood, the man, is emasculated; Blondie, the woman, is virile. Content doesn't disappear: one content replaces another. Marx, Freud, Kenneth Burke (who called it rhetorical criticism), and Roland Barthes have been practitioners of the art of demystification.

The Mechanical Bride was not written under the aegis of "the medium is the message." The examples in *Understanding Media* suggest another view of the contentless medium: "One of the many effects of television on radio has been to shift radio from an entertainment medium into a kind of nervous information system. . . .It was no accident that Senator McCarthy lasted such a very short time when he switched to TV." He was a "hot" figure, and "TV is a cool medium." "In the Kennedy-Nixon debates, those who heard them on the radio received an overwhelming idea of Nixon's superiority. It was Nixon's fate to provide a sharp, high-definition image and action for the cool TV medium that translated that sharp image into the impression of a phony. It might well be that FDR would not have done well on TV. He had learned, at least, how to use the hot radio medium for his very cool job of fireside chatting." McLuhan provides the kind of knowledge that benefits party officials and political consultants in their choice of candidates. Ideas and policies are irrelevant content. What counts is the look of the candidate. In the instances of McCarthy and the Kennedy-Nixon debates, the effect of evacuating content from the medium is to trivialize the events.

McLuhan describes the effects of the media and doesn't pass judgment. He eschews "a moral point of view" because "too often [it] serves as a substitute for understanding in technological matters." Premature moralizing can interfere with understanding. As Jonathan Miller puts it, "McLuhan tends to cast suspicion upon any form of investigation that allows 'values' or anything else to limit the lines of inquiry." His resistance to a moral point of view, it could be argued, enables him to perform the role of double agent between high and popular culture. But then what are we to make of a value-neutral description of something whose effects may be benign or noxious? Where does it leave us? We are left wondering whether McLuhan is complicit with "the cool" medium, or whether he is simply saying, well, here it is and there is very little that

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you can do about it. So much for understanding in order to achieve control.

McLuhan was not the only academic of his time to take popular and mass culture seriously; his contemporaries included Kenneth Burke in America, Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart in England, and Roland Barthes in France. Nor does he have priority in his response to electronic culture; he acknowledges indebtedness to the work of his Canadian compatriot Harold Ennis and to that of Siegfried Gideon, among others. What distinguishes McLuhan is the theatrical enthusiasm with which he embraces his subject—the way he allows what he writes about to infect his style. He never comes across as a mere academic. He is always "with it," a "cool" medium of the media he is studying. (Here are samples of his style taken randomly from *The Mechanical Bride*: "All that glitters is jitters." "Crime thrills for the law abiding. Sex thrills for the impotent." "You want to feel secure. Well, nothing recedes like success." "Is it what's in the jigger that makes them bigger?") It should not come as a surprise that among his admirers were Duke Ellington, Alvin Toffler, Kurt Vonnegut, Andy Warhol, Bob Newhart, Ann Landers, and Peter, Paul and Mary.

McLuhan's prophesy about the demise of the printed word has not been fulfilled. As Robert Darnton recently remarked, "'The Gutenberg galaxy' still exists, and 'typographic man' is still reading his way around it." Moreover, there is no indication of their imminent decline. As a guide to an understanding of electronic media at the present time, McLuhan has little to offer. His prejudice against content does not help us reflect upon the quality of the programs on television (the representation of political and social commentary in its talking heads, the representation of our social and family life in its sitcoms, the representation of violence and sexuality in its dramas). The distinction between "hot" and "cool" does little to illuminate the uses and abuses of the Internet. McLuhan's vision of a global unity of interdependent groups or nations seems little more than a fantasy in our time of ethnic and national conflict. Darnton sums up McLuhan's irrelevance to our present condition: "His vision of a new mental universe held together by post-printing technology now looks dated. If it fired imaginations thirty years ago, it does not provide a map for the millennium we are about to enter."

McLuhan's biographer, W. Terrace Gordon, informs us that Thomas Carlyle was an early favorite of McLuhan's because of his "bold innovative style." Like Carlyle's vatic pronouncements, McLuhan's utterances have the aura of prophesy. Neither Carlyle nor McLuhan depends upon careful and reasoned "linear" argument. Both writers appear at the

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beginnings of revolutionary change: the industrial revolution for Carlyle, the electronic revolution for McLuhan. But the differences between them are also instructive. Unlike McLuhan, Carlyle wrote and spoke from a moral point of view. He did not leave his readers in doubt about where he stood. He was a critic of the industrial revolution, but not a Luddite. He knew that it was an irreversible and creative force, but he also knew that it could be destructive unless ways were found to subordinate it to moral and spiritual purposes. He wrote what may be called, oxymoronically, hopeful jeremiads. His advocacy of a balance between the mechanical and the spiritual, the outer and the inner life, influenced almost every major writer of the nineteenth century (Ruskin, Dickens, Mill, and Morris, among others). In contrast to Carlyle, McLuhan embraces the technological revolution of his time with few reservations. He does on occasion have Luddite fantasies about TV, and speaks of "print" as an antidote, but these are isolated expressions that are never integrated into his general "argument." In his preferred stance of moral neutrality, McLuhan effectively abdicated the role of social or cultural critic.

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ROBERT S. WISTRICH

John Paul II on Jews and Judaism

THE HISTORY OF RELATIONS between Catholics and Jews over the last two thousand years has all too often been a tale of anguish, suffering, and persecution when viewed from a Jewish perspective. The beginning of what has been a sea-change in those relations during the last thirty-five years dates back to the document *Nostra Aetate (In Our Time)*, released by the Vatican in 1965. In fifteen long Latin sentences, Rome removed the collective burden of deicide from the Jewish people and deplored "all hatreds, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism levelled at any time or from any source against the Jews." Pope John XXIII, who had inspired Vatican II, was the first Pope in history—shortly before his untimely death in 1963—to ask forgiveness for "the curse which we unjustly laid on the name of the Jews." He was the first to begin reversing the long-standing Augustinian theology of the Church that the Jews would forever bear the mark of Cain for the crime of rejecting and "crucifying" Jesus.

Of no less importance has been the personal commitment shown by the current Pope, the first non-Italian to sit in St. Peter's Chair for more than four hundred years. Since his election in 1978, John Paul II has repeatedly broken new ground in relations with the Jewish community. His writings, homilies, and speeches on Jewish themes represent a remarkable contribution to the historic dialogue between Jews and Catholics today. This "spiritual pilgrimage" culminated in his becoming the first Roman pontiff to visit a synagogue in the Eternal City (or elsewhere) in 1986—followed seven years later by the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Vatican and the State of Israel. Nor has any previous Pope been as consistent, firm, and unequivocal in his denunciations of anti-Semitism as John Paul II. Indeed, an anthology of texts edited by Eugene J. Fischer (representing the National Conference of Catholic Bishops) and Rabbi Leon Klenicki (of the Anti-Defamation League) and called *Spiritual Pilgrimage: Texts on Jews and Judaism 1979-1995* concludes with the following resounding call by the Pope in January 1995: "Never again anti-Semitism! Never again the arrogance of nationalism! Never again genocide! May the third millennium usher in a season of peace and mutual respect among peoples."

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There is no doubt that the present Pope has had a far more direct experience of Jewish life and suffering than any of his predecessors. As a youth growing up in the small Polish town of Wadowice (about thirty miles from Krakow) where nearly a quarter of the population were Jews, he counted them among his closest friends. As a result of these friendships he became familiar with the rhythms of Jewish observance and family life. Later, after 1939, Karol Woytyla would witness the murder of Poland's Jews and the martyrdom of his fellow Poles while studying secretly for the priesthood in Nazi-occupied Krakow. These macabre events left an indelible impression on the young man (only twenty years old in 1940), and they inform his repeated reminders to Catholics that Europe's Jews were exterminated "only for the reason that they were Jews"—a bitter reality that he would internalize as part of his most intimate credo. When Karol Woytyla returned in 1948 from Rome to Krakow after a two-year period of study, he was shocked to discover that all his Jewish friends in Wadowice had vanished. Speaking of his home town in 1994, John Paul II remarked that it was "from there that I have this attitude of community, of communal feelings about the Jews."

These recollections are vividly expressed in a 1989 letter to his classmate Jerzy Kluger which comments on the plate to be unveiled in commemoration of the Jews of Wadowice who were exterminated by the Nazis: "I remember very clearly the Wadowice Synagogue, which was near to our high school. I have in front of my eyes the numerous worshippers, who during their holidays passed on their way to pray there." In this letter, the Pope stressed his veneration for the memory of the Wadowice Jews so cruelly killed by the Germans, and for the place of worship which the Nazi invaders destroyed. Quoting from his own words of June 14, 1987, delivered to the representatives of the Warsaw Jewish community during his third Papal pilgrimage to Poland, John Paul II stated: "The Church and all peoples and nations within this Church are united with you. . . .Indeed, when they speak with warning to people, nations, and even to the whole of humanity, they place in the forefront your nation, its suffering, its persecutions, its extermination. Also the pope raises his voice of warning in your name. This has a special significance to the pope from Poland, because together with you, he survived all that happened in this land." It was no accident that the Pope should share such a powerful testament of solidarity with the Jews of Wadowice to Jerzy Kluger, though few in the wider world knew of their lifelong friendship.

It is this relationship with Jerzy Kluger, a Polish Jew and Karol Woytyla's last surviving classmate from Wadowice (who today still lives

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in Rome), that lies at the center of the late Darcy O'Brien's recent biography. The lengthy title of this work, *The Hidden Pope: The Untold Story of a Lifelong Friendship That Is Changing the Relationship between Catholics and Jews: The Personal Journey of John Paul II and Jerzy Kluger*, somewhat melodramatically states its objective and also its thesis that in the personal lies the key to the political. Not always convincing and at times overstated, this is nonetheless a heartwarming book that illuminates the personal experience of Karol Woytyla (nicknamed Lolek through much of the story) as a boy, an adolescent, and then as a young priest in postwar communist Poland. It is particularly good at contextualizing and humanizing the evolution of his attitudes to Jews and Judaism. The relations between Polish Catholics and Jews are viewed through the warm filter of the interaction between two boys—one Catholic and one Jewish—whose friendship somehow survived the genocidal storm that devastated Poland in the middle of this century.

The Hidden Pope does not ignore the historical forces that led to this disaster, though the interested reader would be advised to look elsewhere to understand them more adequately. But its real strength as a book lies in its offering a case-study of how the experience of adversity relates to the eternal truths of faith. We can see the roots of Karol Woytyla's rapprochement with Jews and his atoning for Rome's historic complicity in anti-Semitism paradoxically taking hold in the Poland of the 1930s, a hotbed of ethnic and exclusivist nationalism. What is so striking is just how free this particular Polish teenager from Wadowice appears to have been from the anti-Semitic sentiments then raging in Poland, especially in the heart of the Catholic church. As an example, O'Brien quotes from the notorious 1936 speech of Cardinal Hlond, Primate of Poland, then advocating a boycott of Jewish businesses. The Cardinal had claimed "that the Jews are fighting against the Catholic Church, persisting in free thinking, and are the vanguard of godlessness, Bolshevism, subversion. . . .It is a fact that Jews deceive, levy interest, and are pimps. It is a fact that the religious and ethical influence of the Jewish young people on Polish people is a negative one." If this was the inflammatory tone of Poland's leading Catholic on the eve of the Shoah, it takes little imagination to grasp the growing threat posed to Polish Jews by anti-Semitic rowdyism at the street level.

Like his father, who was an upstanding, pious Polish Catholic and former officer in the Austrian army, Karol Woytyla appears to have been quite immune to this kind of Catholic nationalist rhetoric, which branded Polish Jews as immoral, materialistic Christ-killers. O'Brien recounts the following revealing episode which involved Ginka Beer, a

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beautiful Jewish girl and neighbor of the Woytylas who was two years older than Karol and had gone in 1936 to study at the Jagellonian University in Krakow. Within a year she was back in Wadowice, stunned by the rampant anti-Semitism among Polish students and preparing, at her parents' urging, to emigrate to Palestine. Years later, in Israel, she recalled how she broke the news of her imminent departure to the seventeen-year-old Karol and his father.

> There was only one family who never showed any racial hostility toward us, and that was Lolek and his dad. . . .[When I was about] to leave Poland for Palestine because. . .disaster faced the Jews. . .I went to say goodbye to Lolek and his father. Mr. Woytyla was upset about my departure, and when he asked me why, I told him. Again and again he said to me, 'Not all Poles are anti-Semitic. You know I am not!' I spoke to him frankly and said that very few Poles were like him. He was very upset. But Lolek was even more upset than his father. He did not say a word, but his face went very red. I said farewell to him as kindly as I could, but he was so moved that he could not find a single word in reply.

The Hidden Pope is full of such telling episodes, which reveal not only the extent of Polish anti-Semitism but also the fact that there were Polish Catholic families in which such sentiments appeared as shameful and foreign to their outlook. Unfortunately, O'Brien never really comes to grips with the issue of whether the Woytylas were an exception to the anti-Semitic rule or not. What he does provide, however, is a vivid portrait of Karol Woytyla's lasting friendship with Jerzy Kluger, which seemed to cancel out the potentially poisonous effects of the increasingly pervasive Polish anti-Semitic nationalism of the 1930s. Kluger, it should be noted, was a member of Wadowice's most prominent Jewish family (his father, Dr. Wilhelm Kluger, was a successful lawyer and head of the local Jewish community) and came from an affluent, liberal middle-class background. He was also a fine sportsman, a fact of no small importance in shielding Jewish boys in Poland (as elsewhere) from the more commonplace gentile stereotypes and prejudices about Jews. The present Pope, too, was an athletically inclined youth who kept goal for the local Jewish soccer team even against his fellow Catholics. I find something symbolically appealing in this image of Woytyla trying to save Jews from defeat or possibly even helping them to victory in a sporting contest.

I also found O'Brien's evocation of Jerzy's father particularly fascinating. Wilhelm Kluger emerges as a staunch Polish patriot who spoke

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regularly in tribute to Poland's ruler Marshal Jozef Pilsudski and proudly wore the legionnaire's uniform. The Klugers were clearly Poles first and Jews only second. Dr. Kluger was convinced, however, that both Poles and Jews would have to stand together to defend Polish freedom. He genuinely felt that his roots in Polish life, history, and culture were as deep as any Catholic's. (In this, he differed from that majority of pre-war Polish Jews who identified either with Jewish Orthodoxy or with the Zionists.) A Western-oriented Jew of cosmopolitan persuasion, he felt that anything that served to exclude Jews from Polish life could only cause trouble. Hence, he concluded that Yiddish was an encumbrance (though he spoke it fluently) and a source of separateness. This attitude seems to have corresponded to Dr. Kluger's passage from being a one-time Bundist agitator to becoming a supporter of the moderate wing of the Polish Socialist Party.

Dr. Kluger was determined to preserve good relations between Jews and Catholics despite the intensifying anti-Semitism at the end of the 1930s. His efforts at inter-faith communication included the promotion of dialogue through music, and it was this (as well as his friendship with Jerzy) that particularly encouraged the very musical young Woytyla to visit the Kluger household regularly. Woytyla's respect for Dr. Kluger was further increased by the courageous way that Kluger defended both Jews and Catholics in legal cases.

If I have dealt at some length with Jerzy's father, it is not only because I found O'Brien's portrait of him so interesting, but also for a more personal reason. During the 1950s, Dr. Wilhelm Kluger was a tenant in my maternal grandparents' house in Golders Green in northwest London, where he lived on the first floor. I remember him as a kindly, distinguished-looking elderly man who was a compulsive newspaper reader and seemed extremely well informed about current events. Every day, after primary school ended at four o'clock, I would go to see my grandparents, and would also visit Dr. Kluger's room (which reeked of strong tobacco) to ask for one of his papers. His favorite reading was the Labour *Daily Herald* (which no longer exists), the *Manchester Guardian* (as it was then called), and the Polish-language gazette *Dziennik Polski*. He took a great interest in me during those years (I was between six and eleven years old), treating me almost like a grandson and encouraging my precocious appetite for what was happening in the wider world. Frequently he would eat with my grandparents Helena and Szymon Silbiger, modern Orthodox Jews from Krakow who had recently landed on British shores, and they would, of course, converse together in Polish. I vaguely knew that Dr. Kluger had once been a prominent lawyer and a

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Polish army captain (in the reserves). I also knew that, like my parents, he had been in Lvov in 1940 (then under Soviet occupation) after having escaped from the Germans. Again, like them, he and his son Jerzy had been relocated to the interior of the Soviet Union. The Klugers' itinerary was remarkably parallel to that of my own family. They had arrived in a work camp somewhere within the Soviet Socialist Republic of Maryjskaya (about four hundred miles east of Moscow) in the middle of a dense forest. Like many other Poles, having been classified as a kind of "slave labor," they had to cut timber with handsaws and drag it to the railroad or the nearby Volga river for transport downstream. Jerzy (better known as Jurek) always managed to "fulfill his norm" and showed the kind of enterprise in adapting to the hardships of Russia that reminds me of the stories of my American cousins who lived through similar experiences in their early twenties. Like them, he was physically strong, had an eye for women, and was constantly getting in and out of trouble.

One difference between the Klugers and the Wistrichs (at any rate those of my father's family who found themselves in Russia) was that both Wilhelm and Jerzy were determined to serve in the Polish armed forces. They managed, after various adventures, to join General Anders's Polish Army which finally succeeded in evacuating about 150,000 Polish troops from the wartime Soviet Union. Jurek and his father eventually arrived in Palestine, were transferred like their fellow Poles to the British Army, and (in Jurek's case) fought valiantly in North Africa and Italy for the Allied cause.

O'Brien narrates these adventures with gusto and skill, while simultaneously following Karol Woytyla's painful experiences in German-occupied Poland between 1939 and 1944. Lolek lost his father (his mother had died when he was a young boy), then worked for a time as a quarry laborer before beginning clandestine studies for the priesthood in 1942 under the wing of Krakow's princely Archbishop, Adam Sapieha. He was ordained in Krakow on the Feast of All Saints in 1946 before being sent to Rome to write his doctoral dissertation at the Dominican Angelicum University—a thesis about *The Issue of Faith in Saint John of the Cross*, which he completed two years later. In the 1950s Woytyla went on to teach ethics at the Catholic University of Lublin (the only such institution in the Communist bloc) while still living in Krakow. He continued to write scholarly and religious articles, as well as poems, plays, and theatrical reviews under a *nom de plume*.

In 1958 he was appointed bishop (by the dying Pope Pius XII) and four years later was already one of the youngest bishops to attend the

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historic debates over Vatican II in Rome, which would open up a new page in Catholic-Jewish relations. Nominated Archbishop of Krakow in 1964, Woytyla emerged at the Vatican Council as a modernizer, with a particular enthusiasm for Rome's pruning of doctrinal deadwood about Judaism in its epochal *Nostra Aetate*. It was in the same year that Jurek Kluger, now living in Rome (having completed his studies in Italy after demobilization), first read of a speech given in his new adopted home by the archbishop of Krakow, one Karol Woytyla—his former classmate and closest friend, whom he had not seen for twenty-seven years. The renewal of their friendship would, ironically enough, bring Jurek back to his Jewish roots, as well as enable him to know the Catholic clergy not just as priests but as human beings.

In the immediate postwar years Jurek married a Catholic and began to move in predominantly gentile circles. He had virtually no connection with Jewish communal life in Rome. But under the prodding of Karol Woytyla (since 1967 a cardinal, and hence a more frequent visitor to Rome) the Jewish past began to come more alive for him. There were even issues over which he now disagreed *as a Jew* with his old friend—such as the beatification of Father Maximilian Kolbe, a Polish Franciscan priest who had been martyred in Auschwitz in 1941. Woytyla had been one of the most active advocates of his beatification in 1971 (later, as Pope, he would elevate Kolbe to sainthood) despite the fact that the Franciscan had been the founder and director of a publishing house that issued *Maly Dziennik*—the most anti-Semitic Church-affiliated daily newspaper in pre-war Poland. Kolbe was arguably more of a passive than a militant anti-Semite; he was undoubtedly an anti-Nazi (whose outspokenness had landed him in Auschwitz), and his heroic, sacrificial death made him a Polish national symbol. But for Kluger, as for most Jews, a priest who had abetted anti-Semitic hatred in Poland, however indirectly, could not be a worthy candidate for sainthood unless his martyrdom had involved the saving of Jewish lives—which was not the case. Moreover, this beatification took place at a time when the Polish communist regime refused to acknowledge that the Jews constituted the majority of the victims murdered at Auschwitz.

O'Brien does not gloss over such differences and generally handles them with tact and fairness. At the same time he emphasizes that only after Cardinal Woytyla became Pope John Paul II in 1978 did it become apparent that he "would make the reversal of a lamented Catholic record [on Judaism, Israel and anti-Semitism] the major theme of his papacy." Possibly O'Brien goes a little too far in insisting on the present Pope's "unprecedented Catholic affirmation of the eternal validity of Judaism,

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an idea that was previously inconceivable"; it was not quite so unprecedented nor inconceivable as this implies, nor is the Pope's affirmation entirely devoid of ambiguity. Moreover, it might be questioned whether the revolutionary change in attitudes to Jews and Judaism is really on a par with, for example, John Paul II's impact in wrenching Poland from the Soviet Empire and sapping the moral foundations of communism.

But O'Brien is certainly right to stress the importance of the Pope's constant reaffirmation of the special character of Jewish suffering in World War II, a leitmotif which began with his first Papal visit to Poland in June 1979. His homily at Auschwitz, recited with impressive gravity and tearful eyes, recalled "the memory of the people whose sons and daughters were intended for total extermination," a people whose origin was from Abraham, "our father in faith," who had received the commandment "Thou shalt not kill," and who had tragically "experienced in special measure what is meant by killing."

Despite periodical Jewish concerns that John Paul II's cult of Auschwitz as the "Golgotha of the modern world" might herald an attempt to "Christianize the Shoah," there can be little doubt that the Pope's warnings about the Holocaust have been primarily directed against racism, and, more specifically, against anti-Semitism. Nor is there much doubt that the Pope sees the problem of anti-Semitism in the theological framework of a historic misunderstanding of God's Chosen People and of the true connection between Judaism and Christianity, which has been obscured and gravely deformed over the centuries.

As the texts in *Spiritual Pilgrimage* make clear, John Paul II has been working for the last twenty years to re-educate Catholics on these matters, to set the record straight so that Christians and Jews can begin a new millennium in peace, harmony, and mutual respect. In this endeavor he has continued the work of Pope John XXIII, Vatican II, and a whole generation of pioneering Catholic and Jewish scholars, beginning with the French-Jewish historian Jules Isaac. As a result, many Catholics have begun to accept that God does not go back on his promises, that proselytism towards Jews is abhorrent where it is not a matter of free choice, and that the Jewish people and their faith deserve their deepest respect.

In a speech on November 7, 1980 to the Jewish community of Berlin, the Polish Pope praised such Jewish thinkers as Martin Buber and Franz Rozenzweig, "who, through their creative familiarity with Jewish and German languages, constructed a wonderful bridge for a deeper meeting of both cultural areas." Even more significantly, he insisted that the Old Covenant had *never been revoked by God*; that "Jews and Christians, as

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children of Abraham, are called to be a blessing for the world"; and he fervently prayed "for the fullness of *Shalom* for all your brothers in *nationality* [my italics] and in faith, and also for the land to which Jews look with particular veneration. . . .May all peoples in Jerusalem soon be reconciled and blessed in Abraham!"

This last reference, which includes Muslims as well as Christians and Jews, also highlights another interesting feature of John Paul II's position on issues of concern to the Jewish people. As early as 1980, by referring to the *nationality* and the *land*, he was clearly pointing to Israel and perhaps hinting at the recognition that would eventually come in 1993. But as the texts also reveal, the Pope did raise the Palestinian issue continually and has been sympathetic to their plight. His position on the Middle East has been finely balanced between recognition of the rights of both Israeli Jews and Palestinians to a homeland of their own. In the 1980s he received not only Yitzhak Shamir and Shimon Peres (both Polish-born Foreign Secretaries and then Prime Ministers of Israel) but also Yasser Arafat in the Vatican—the latter visit provoking much Jewish criticism.

So, too, did the pomp-laden official reception in Rome for blacklisted Austrian President Kurt Waldheim (an ex-Nazi and supposedly a good Catholic) in 1987—one of John Paul II's less felicitous acts of diplomacy. This period between 1985 and 1990 was one in which Jewish-Catholic relations experienced a number of serious setbacks, which unfortunately evoke little if any serious reflection or commentary in *Spiritual Pilgrimage*. Things began, however, promisingly enough, with *Notes on the Correct Way to Present Jews and Judaism in Catholic Preaching and Teaching*—a handbook meant to clarify and rectify omissions in the Vatican II document of twenty years earlier. Better still, on April 13, 1986 came the Pope's historic visit to the synagogue in Rome—one of the most dramatic moments of his entire pontificate. His address on that occasion contained three especially relevant points. First, he declared: "The Jewish religion is not 'extrinsic' to us, but in a certain way is 'intrinsic' to our own religion. With Judaism, therefore, we have a relationship which we do not have with any other religion. You are our dearly beloved brothers and, in a certain way, it could be said that you are our elder brothers." Secondly, John Paul II reaffirmed the position of *Nostra Aetate* in repudiating any collective or ancestral blame being attached to the Jews for Christ's passion; and thirdly, the Church rejected any notion claiming to be based on scripture that the Jews were a "cursed" people. On the contrary, in the words of St. Paul, the Jews were beloved of God, and—to quote the present Pope—"called. . .with an irrevocable calling."

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John Paul II's message went beyond proposing mere coexistence, or more intellectual exchange between Jews and Catholics. It was an appeal from the heart for a religious dialogue "animated by fraternal love." He also saw a special role for Jews and Christians in the modern world as "the trustees and witnesses of an ethic marked by the Ten Commandments," to confront a society which is "often lost in agnosticism and individualism and which is suffering the bitter consequences of selfishness and violence." A more problematic reference during his visit was the passing reference to the "high price in blood" paid by the Jewish community of Rome during World War II. John Paul II chose only to remember that the Holy See had thrown open Vatican City "to offer refuge and safety to so many Jews of Rome being hunted by their persecutors." This was a somewhat selective remembrance, which, though true as far it went, ignored the public silence of Pope Pius XII even as Roman Jews were being deported under his windows to the death camps in Auschwitz.

This contentious issue, which increasingly provokes aggressive and militant rejoinders from some very conservative Catholics in the United States—especially those who are dedicated at all costs to presenting Pius XII as a hero of Catholicism—has been profoundly damaging to Catholic-Jewish relations. The present Pope, by describing his controversial predecessor as "a great Pope and a wise diplomat" and seeming to push him on to the fast track for sainthood, has in my judgment made a regrettable error. This is not an internal Catholic issue alone since the sanctification of Pius XII would have symbolic meaning for Jews as well as Catholics. It might well prove to be a disaster for the Catholic-Jewish dialogue, whose achievements are surely not worth risking over such a controversial and historically unresolved issue. It was left to the president of Rome's Jewish community, Professor Giacomo Saban, to point quietly to the dark centuries during which John Paul II's Papal predecessors had ghettoized and discriminated against Jews. This was a point all too frequently overlooked in Vatican documents, including the most recent one of March 1998. But in one veiled though unmistakable reference to Pope Pius XII and the Holocaust, Saban aptly commented: "What was taking place on one of the banks of the Tiber could not have been unknown on the other side of the river, nor could what was happening elsewhere on the European continent." This single, terse sentence sums up a whole history of antagonistic Catholic and Jewish memories of the past that find their symbolic reference-point in the story of Pius XII and the Holocaust.

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Despite the impact of the Pope's strikingly fraternal gestures, Catholic-Jewish relations would, however, be overshadowed for the rest of the 1980s by the affair of the Carmelite nuns in Auschwitz. This episode, which raised both Polish-Jewish and Jewish-Catholic tensions to new heights of ugliness, is glossed over by the anthology and treated somewhat sketchily even by O'Brien. It ignited Jewish impatience with the Vatican and anger at a resurgent Polish nationalism that was staking a renewed claim to Auschwitz as being, above all, the site of Polish martyrdom.

Another unfortunate incident was John Paul II's proclaimed intention, during his June 1999 Papal visit to Poland, to beatify over a hundred Polish Catholics as martyrs of Auschwitz. Again, as was the case ten years ago, such a step is bound to heighten Jewish fears that this Pope (despite his remarkable opening to the Jews) is surreptitiously encouraging the "Christianizing" of the Holocaust. Worse still, in the eyes of some militant Catholics it may promote the historical falsification that there was a war against the Catholics analogous to the Nazi war against the Jews. Whatever the Pope's true intentions (and while I believe him to be misguided in this instance, there are no grounds to suspect any anti-Jewish slight), the symbolic conflict between Jews and Catholics over the meaning of Auschwitz is still seemingly intact. In 1989 similar tensions produced the malevolently anti-Semitic homily of Cardinal Glemp (Primate of Poland) against the "anti-Polonism" of the allegedly all-powerful "Jewish" media—and in the Polish elections that followed, the "Jewish question" once more raised its ugly head. Today, things have fortunately not yet reached such a boil, but the tensions between Polish Catholics and Jews over the memory of Auschwitz are still potentially explosive.

The feeling exists to this day among many Polish Catholics that while the Jewish Holocaust is universally honored (especially in the West), the three million non-Jewish Poles who lost their lives in the war are ignored; that, while Auschwitz is widely seen as the symbol of Jewish memory, the blood sacrifice of tens of thousands of Polish Catholic victims in the same death camp is barely known outside of Poland. This sense of frustration and rivalry in victimhood is by no means restricted solely to anti-Semitic Poles—it also festers and has found voice even among those who helped Jews during the war. This resentment may be humanly understandable, but it is a form of Polish and Catholic paranoia to present this situation as some kind of "Jewish conspiracy." There is, however, still worse news. Today, in the United States, there are militant Catholic voices who have taken this a stage further in a soft form of "Holocaust revisionism," which claims that five million Catholics [*sic!*]

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were the anonymous "others" in Hitler's alleged Holocaust against the Catholic Church. (Three million gentile Poles are hereby annexed as "Catholics," though those Nazi executioners who were also "Catholics," from Hitler and Himmler down through the SS and Order Police, are for the purposes of this kind of tendentious propaganda merely "neopagans.") One wonders if, by this criterion, millions of Russians killed by the Nazis should be counted as Orthodox Christians!

The Pope's record in mediating these conflicts leaves something to be desired, thankless task though it must be. Interestingly, as O'Brien shows, Jerzy Kluger played a little-known mediating role in these affairs, as he did in developing channels of communication with the Israelis that eventually led to the formal recognition of the Jewish state. This is all the more remarkable given that Kluger has never had any overt political ambitions, let alone seen himself as a self-conscious ethnic or religious Jew. Nevertheless, the Pope has bestowed at times a unique trust in him which Kluger has readily reciprocated, despite being placed on occasion (as in the Glemp affair) in an excruciating situation. His consolation, as O'Brien puts it, is to have "played an important role in the achieving of reconciliation between Catholics and Jews that culminated in the recognition of Israel."

This recognition has been a crucial element in helping to resolve the bimillennial religious and political antagonism between Rome and Jerusalem. On the occasion of his 1994 address to the First Ambassador of Israel to the Holy See, the Pope spoke in French about the distinctive nature of the new relations between the two parties. As always, he mentioned their common cultural roots ("starting with the writings of the Bible, the book of books, an ever-living source") but also recalled the unique character of the Holy Land, sanctified by the "One God's revelation to men"; more specifically, he evoked the millions of believers of the great monotheistic religions who turn to the Holy City of Jerusalem as to a sacred heritage—but also to a scene of division and conflict. For the Pope, "the dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people of Israel and of the whole world" would enable both "to better serve the great causes of humanity." Above all, he looked forward to the day when Jews, Christians, and Muslims will "hail one another in Jerusalem with the greeting of peace." Perhaps the Papal dream (and that of so many others) will be fulfilled during John Paul II's projected millennial visit to the land of Israel. One is permitted to doubt and also to hope. Jerzy Kluger, too, has played his modest, unassuming, but not unimportant part in this odyssey. Dr. Kluger would have been very proud.

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ODYSSEUS ELYTIS

Fortune Had A Surplus

Fortune had a surplus it seems
And August in midwinter reaches out to touch us
With a very lengthy arm. But we are elsewhere
The first life sets its prow into the tempest though beaten
I lived in long-enduring opposition within which the opulence
Of the Cyclades' goldblue and of Aeolis' breaths
Licking words and other syllables of branchlets I got through
And I went from Estonia to Israel and from Israel
To Columbia. Alone. And as for necessities I was naked
I found sweet rains and nights of black coral
And a free thread of if and of no
So where and in what oracles' negatives is the unknown still being bribed
Whose quail's leap frees and drops silver fish in the night
It's time the idols be depicted both in our sleep and upon us
So the sea's females are stirred up
It is from our imprints that spring will have descendants
No one else comes out safely from the sum of such centuries.

Come So Cynthia

Come so Cynthia
now treaders of the little
underwater reef and anyway it's time for the treefullness to be walled in
and let the wave kiss and let the wind yield good omens.
Because even the rain's mind
is a thought and the very valuable things are of minor gold.
Time of mania and of levantine.

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Hand And Stone So Near By

Hand and stone so near by deceive death
The begonias of St. Martin's fields sigh
We are just about to play a little rain as an instrument on a Friday
Near the still uncut fruit trees
Together with all close relatives and children
Mauve flowerbeds all turned
West of Sorrow
Ding it tolls maybe it means I maybe you. On one foot
We all set off but only for two steps. One of untread-on dawn
And one of the endless sunset of Oia. Which means
That condensed days and nights act within us mostly in our ignorance
And how meek the grass how rough the unjustly broken stone
Thus the world Eleutherios Martes Joseph Artemis Kerykos
Melissine and the unripe grandchild of Vatana
The point of time reaches as far as Hephaestus.

Translated from the Greek by Jeffrey Carson and Nikos Sarris

UMBERTO SABA

Smoke

Consolation of the long sleepless nights
in winter
—then, anguished, he roamed
the dark labyrinths of thought; hand
running anxiously to your call—
the taut
thread rises, then breaks,
and from the open window, one ray
colors the sky;

and it reminds me of a little house, alone
among the fields, smoking from its dinner.

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Camioncino

The blue and white trolley to the Lido
traverses the avenue—the summer crowd
dressed, you know, in pretty colors—;
spreading a little song, the music of the spheres,
in the heart where its loving echo still lives.

Youngsters on bikes ride around this old man
like butterflies to the light. But you,
who have walked on the earth for so long,
allow yourself, gently, to be taken
by the movement of life!

Translated from the Italian by Averill Curdy

DAN CHIASSON

Visit

(Latin, "he saw," "he viewed")

Dying was not a change
of clothes, not a chance

to wear pajamas. I knew
his limbs were stiffening

for seven years, like one
of Dante's suicides kept

alive within a tree. He knew
each ache would harden

him at last, he watched
it happen to himself, and

watched me watching him.
He saw me from his window

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take a fly rod from
his shed and put it in my car.

He said "I saw you steal
my trout rod," which meant

"I haven't died." So I
returned it. Seeing him

die was like seeing a boy
inflate a sandwich bag

with breath, then empty it.
His flesh that had been

flesh, then Elm, was Ash.
I stayed a week, and

when he wasn't dying
anymore, I went away.

CHRISTIAN NAGLE

Lament for Attila the Hun

In all, yours must have been trump card years.
Roaring off key in some gutted town, you'd gut
any soldier forgetting how to eat without a knife.

For twenty years from the Caspian to the Rhine!
Cartographers only pencilled in Pannonia's borders,
carefully mixed your outlands into neighbors' yards.

Nights your armies kipped, through shaggy clouds
the Little Bear found you picking scabs at a sentry fire,
stick-drawing new victories with the watchmen.

Sparing virgins at your tent, you'd consider your naked
ring-finger: Constantinople, a wife. Could formality—
the prospect of regular beds and baths—cool your sword,

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ride your nerves raw in the saddle? Small horseman.
Attila Meathook. Vandal-sire. Not precious stones
so much, for you, as plucked eyes, rain and flag stars.

And still, Attila, you left the Coliseum
wrestling its ghosts, Rome its new Jehovah.
Other cities in the smoke of entrails, blurred.

ALDA MERINI

Holy Land

I've known Jericho,
        I've even had my Palestine,
the walls of Bedlam
        were the walls of Jericho
    and a fetid puddle of water
    baptized us all.
    Inside there we were Jews
    and the Pharisees were on high
    and the Messiah was also there
        lost in the crowd:
    a madman who shrieked at Heaven
        all his love for God.

    All of us, ascetic flock,
    were like birds
        and now and then a dark
    net imprisoned us
    but we went toward the harvest
    of our Lord and Christ the Savior.

We were washed and buried
smelling of incense.
    Afterwards, when we were in love
they gave us electroshock
because, they said, a madman
is incapable of loving anyone.

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But one day within the sepulcher
I, too, reawoke
I, too, like Jesus
have had my resurrection,
but I didn't ascend to the heavens
I descended to hell
where I stand stunned
by ancient Jericho's walls.

Translated from the Italian by Sharon Dolin

JOHN MATTHIAS

Two in Harar

I. Sir Richard Burton, 1854

He learned Somali from the soft and plaintive voice
of Kadima who allowed him to remove the leather lace
stitching up her labia and put two fingers in.

This was anthropology, linguistics. Topology and trade
would come in turn. Calling himself Haji Mirza Abdullah,
he wore a silken girdle with a dirk & chewed on khat

he found sufficiently priapic that in time he'd force his
member through infibulations of the local girls
without unlacing first. Now he rose and went to work.

He'd play the Amir off against al-Haji Sharmakay
on matters touching eunuchs and the slaves.
He'd demonstrate Koranic scholarship, say Allahu Akhbar.

He'd mesmerize them with his tales from the Nights.
His exegesis of The Sura dazzled all the mullahs
and he wisely took a local abban from among the Isas.

By the southwest coast near Zayla he turned inland,
riding on a donkey with a shotgun on his knee.
Everything that was not stone was sand. Everything that

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was not sun was dust and wind. His bodyguards were
Long Gulad, The Hammal, End of Time.
They sang him Belwos, fed him holcus for his colic,

millet beer and boiled barks. If the nomads took him
he would learn phallotomy, his penis gone
for scholarship among the wives in someone's tent.

Bedu lurked about his camp and hurled stones.
They called him Old Woman, Chief of Zayla, Painted Man.
They called him Turk & Priest & Pilgrim—Merchant,

Banyan, and Calamity Sent Down from God.
He gave up his disguise and forged a letter from the
Aden consul introducing him as an ambassador

and dressed up in his captain's uniform with
epaulets and sword. He marched until he saw the walls
no white man ever breached, the gate he thought

he'd walk through chanting poems. Back in Zayla
they proclaimed him dead. Back in London
Karl Marx & Tennyson sat down to read his Mecca Haj.

The Amir asked him if he'd come to buy Harar.

II. Arthur Rimbaud, 1886-1888

And was Harar for Sale? And were Le Voyant's visions
null and void? Solde. He'd left behind what time
nor science had acknowledged, drowned his book of magic

and returned to earth. And one must enter splendid cities
absolutely modern after all. Among the packs
of one-eyed mangy dogs. And with a taste for soil & stone.

His I was other and another still. His ear once made
him brass and like a bugle he had blown.
A scent of wood, he'd found himself a broken violin.

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He did not think he knew and did not want to know
how he'd been thought into his poems.
He colored vowels no more and all of them went black.

He'd be a gun-butt now if he were wood;
if he were steel, a rail laid down in Africa for desert trains.
He studied business, engineering, crafts.

He'd sold unknown harmonic intervals for
proper calculation and would traffic
in the hides and coffee-beans and ivories of Somalia

living by the Raouf Pasha palace earning two percent
commission from Pierre Bardey on trade.
And when the Mahdi rose and Dervishes advanced

through Abyssinia, he mocked Kartoum's illuminated
English Gordon, rich Egyptians & the Turks,
and took a caravan of armaments on inland from Tajoura

and was ruined. He came back to Harar and tried to run
the trading station while in Paris decadents
proclaimed a system based entirely on his Sonnet of the Vowels.

Black A, white E, red I, blue O, green U.
Was he back where he belonged? This wasn't what Parnassians
had in mind. They might proclaim King Menelek

himself a symbolist if he became Negasti & Hararis were
his businessmen of Empire up and down their narrow streets.
There was no Amir left in town, no Wazir.

Sultan Ahmad bin Sultan Abibakr had asked Captain Burton
if he'd come to buy Harar. The poet advertised the sale
of priceless bodies, hors de toute race, hors de tout monde.

Travelers would not render their commission for a while.

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JAMES MCCORKLE

Simulacra

And this, what you read is a precession
Of the equinox, the wind hushed in nubbed branches
As light darts the fields
Whose agates are all yours, waiting.

Today you have been walking in the fields,
Ephemerals soon to dazzle
In brief weeks before the forest closes
Over and what was seen a recollection.

I compose in memory: the deer move closer,
The sunset brilliant as Vesuvian frescoes,
Places worn back to a dull cream
Unstained by pigment—this is how the days end.

I have been reading about signs,
The beginnings of disenchantment.
Unmet passion is the danger: the deer catch my scent
And wait for me, you say, to step from my disguise.

And this, what you read is yours,
Waiting for you to step toward it,
You share in its beginnings, your voice
Overlays mine with a richer more true sound.

Today you have been walking in the fields,
Clouds reel above you, the sky unlocks itself,
A tree has bloomed, overnight you believe,
Curved like bowed deer, the ground tremors.

I walk back to reach this spot where you must be
Still walking toward me, bringing these words,
Telling me you saw flying across the meadow
A din of thrushes chasing a hawk from the wood.

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NIKOS FOKAS

Spirit Saturday

Trees swell this time of year, their aromas
Like disembodied spirits
Coming round again
As we the living wash off the gravestones,
Part of a pattern that excludes innovation—
Spring, summer, fall, winter—
Every change known beforehand,
Every revolution a repetition.

Because it's primordial, this cycle
Doesn't accept innovation, nor do humans.
Better, we say, to live in light like a plant
With roots in the dark, or in front
Of the most horrifying scenes to hide
Behind one's elbow,
As if in the middle of the night—better that
Than to fall into some third, unpredictable state.

A third state is completely unacceptable, unacceptable
What would disrupt the orderly interchange
Of light and dark, hot and cold.
Better to face, we say, Charon or Hell—
Better ghosts,
Who even without blood or brains share,
At least a bit, our belief in a yearly cycle,
So here they are again in the late winter trees.

Taking their liveliness, it's true,
From our pain,
They appear to be alive, but in our world
They're even frailer than we are. From their circle
Of existence exceeding reality,
They smile yet are absent—don't trust them!—
Though it's better, we assure ourselves, to have spirits
Who obey, like we do, seasonal limits.

Translated by Don Schofield and Harita Mona

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DAVID SIDORSKY

Does the Left Still Have the Power to Speak?

RICHARD RORTY has long been recognized as one of America's leading philosophers, distinguished, among his other contributions, for an original interpretation of Deweyan pragmatism which seeks to demonstrate the compatibility of this quintessentially American thinker with central aspects of the philosophy of Martin Heidegger, the arch representative of continental European existentialism. Accordingly, the prospect of Rorty's development of his views on the future of American culture and politics inevitably gives rise to a sense of expectation.

In one sense, this expectation is not disappointed. For Rorty, in *Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth-Century America* (Harvard University Press, $18.95), has raised an appropriate and fundamental question after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the debacle of other major socialist experiments in Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America: does the Left still have the power to speak? This question carries an even more significant charge because of the continued intellectual domination of leftist ideological views in American culture, a domination which coexists alongside an awareness that the policies and historical projections of the Left have been confounded by the realities of our times.

Rorty's answer to this question is affirmative. His argument is that the Left has played a necessary and uniquely beneficent role in American history during the twentieth century by defending the weak against the strong. From 1964 to the present, according to Rorty, the power of the Left has been weakened because it has been splintered into plethora of groups. Consequently, Rorty has faith that the restoration of what he terms the "reformist Left," as an inclusive coalition comprised of all the Leftist bands of the spectrum that had emerged during this century, can be the activist instrument for "achieving our country."

The framing of this affirmative answer, however, involves Rorty in an ambivalent reflection on each of the main components that have made up the historical Left., for in describing any particular leftist group, Rorty combines a species of hagiography with a critique of practice. Thus, he goes so far as to credit the "academic Left" with the elimination of the prevalence of what he terms "sadism"—that is, prejudice

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against racial, ethnic, or gender communities—in contemporary American life. This extraordinary achievement, according to Rorty, is the result of the academic Left's introducing into the American university programs which study the culture of designated "victim groups," as exemplified by Native American studies, black studies, ethnic studies, women's studies, and gay and lesbian studies. Rorty concedes the claim that the standards demonstrated in these programs do not meet the norms of traditional scholarship. In his assessment, however, this fact is outweighed by their social contribution. So, in terms of curricular planning, Rorty advocates extending the criteria of victimhood to move beyond multiculturalism to include economically disadvantaged groups, resulting in such programs as "homelessness studies."

Yet Rorty reprimands the academic Left for its withdrawal from an activist coalition which would promote institutional reform. The academic Left, therefore, despite Rorty's ideological agreement with its views, becomes the special target of his criticism on the ground that it has adopted a role of passive spectatorship toward the task of "achieving our country."

Similarly, Rorty tenders to the New Left the extravagant compliment that it saved American constitutional democracy. It did so, in his view, paradoxical though it may seem, by carrying out actions of dissidence and violent protest beyond the previously recognized boundaries of democratic legitimacy in order to advance its preferred solutions for the problems of civil rights and the Vietnam War in the 1960s.

At the same time, Rorty criticizes the New Left for its continuing rejection of the promise of American democracy. In Rorty's view, pride in America became anathema to the New Left when its image of the United States was fixed by its interpretation of the American role in Vietnam. Even though Rorty stresses his own agreement with the New Left's interpretation of this role as reflecting militarist and imperialist tendencies in American society, he argues that the New Left's anti-Americanism must be replaced. Rorty's thesis is that the persistence of hostility or indifference to the historical achievements of American society are a barrier to the return to political power of the "reformist Left." Thus, in the opening passages of this book, Rorty sounds a trumpet call for the revival of American national pride as the necessary condition for the restoration of the Left in American society.

The hagiographical element even enters into his reflection on the activities of the American Communist Party. For Rorty affirms their perspective that the communist Left made a significant contribution to the rise of American trade unionism, New Deal legislation, and the fight

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against racism, both in the 1930s and continuing through to the post-war period.

At the same time, he records his autobiographical development as an "anti-Red diaper baby," which generated his strong disagreement with the communist Left because of its blind support for the Soviet Union during its totalitarian and imperial phases. With the demise of the Soviet Union, however, Rorty supports the inclusion of the residual communist Left in a grand coalition which is the necessary vehicle for the return to power of the ideas of the reformist Left.

For Rorty, the economic approach of the Old Left was fundamentally justified since its priority value was equality. Even if its programs for the nationalization of agriculture and industry have not been successful, its prescriptions for redistribution should be pursued. Thus, Rorty retains some portion of Marxist economic theory as viable. He writes: "Had Kerensky managed to ship Lenin back to Zurich, Marx would still have been honored as a brilliant political economist who foresaw how the rich would use industrialization to immiserate the poor." Consistent with this interpretation of economic development, the policies of his envisaged coalition of the reformist Left would remain continuous with those of the Old Left: redistribution of wealth as the principle strategy for realizing economic well-being and social justice for all classes of American society.

At the same time, Rorty charges much of the Old Left, even though it was comprised of diverse progressive socialist and religious radical groups as well as Marxist parties, with the continuation of an outdated belief in the Marxist philosophy of history. Rorty argues for the repudiation of Marxism by the reformist Left on the ground that the Marxist "philosophy of history" should be viewed "like Herbert Spencer's, a nineteenth-century curiosity."

Rorty's survey of the varieties of leftist experience in America uncovers a dilemma. On the one hand, his support of the Left's positions leads him to accept their negative descriptions of the history of the United States as that of an exploitative capitalist structure at home, projecting imperial aggression abroad. On the other hand, his advocacy of a reformist Left requires an attitude of pride in America and hope in its institutional perfectibility. It is questionable whether Rorty ever resolves this dilemma, although one approach to its resolution is implicit in the title of this book: "Achieving Our Country." Rorty attributes the phrase to a distinction advanced by James Baldwin. For Baldwin, while the American past was judged to be "unforgivable," this judgment was not to exclude a hope for participation in "achieving our country." For

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Rorty, the Left is pronounced to be the party of perennial hope against the prevailing status quo. So he asserts this distinction as providing the basis for the "saving remnants" of the American Left of the past century to form the redemptive coalition of the reformist Left which will achieve the American future, despite "the ghastly reality of contemporary America."

In Rorty's tour of the political horizon in search of the relevant bases for institutional reform in the United States, there is no recognition of the Right portion of the spectrum. Rorty does not recognize its existence as requiring refutation or offering a potential for challenges or alternatives. Any reference to the existence of a non-Left view is simply the occasion for derision without argument, not even rising to the common polemical discourtesy of the refutation of a caricature. For Rorty, the non-Left in American history, politics, culture, or economic development appears only as the championing of greed and avarice, as the reinforcement of the strong against the weak, or as the heralding of the discovery of sin.

Consequently, in Rorty's quest for the policy options for achieving our country, there is no examination of the issues that divide the Left from the Right. The evidence and argument that are essential to justify a new emergence of the Left after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the apparent failure that followed so many socialist and even liberal or welfare state experiments in the 1970s and 1980s are never debated. As a result, although Rorty has raised expectations and promisingly beckoned an affirmative answer to the question of whether the Left still has the power to speak, this promise carries no collateral support. For on this important question, as in any matter of judgment, a steadfast refusal to confront or consider alternative claims would render the verdict not only to be unpersuasive and unconvincing in discourse but unsubstantiated or insignificant in fact.

Rorty's central advocacy of economic redistribution, for example, avoids any reference to the contrary theory, familiar evidence, or argument that alternative strategies of free market competition may generate greater rates of economic growth resulting in improvement for the masses of a society. Even apart from this theoretical discussion, there has been a general empirical recognition that some of the programs initiated by the reformist Left during the past decades, particularly those associated with "The Great Society," have not realized their goals, or may even have been counter-productive. Rorty provides no evaluation of the success or failure of these programs but urges their continuation and extension.

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While Rorty's focus is on the United States, this issue of the viability of the policies of the reformist Left has global implications and must appeal to global conditions. There is negative evidence against Rorty's thesis in the fact that even where there has been a collapse of developing capitalist economies (as in Russia, or Indonesia and other Asian nations), the response has not been toward socialism and redistribution. Rather, the policy prescriptions for economic reform have aimed at improving the rule of law and at restructuring "crony capitalism" or "criminal oligarchic capitalism" in order to achieve the conditions for free markets. Where the parties of the traditional Left have come to power in Western Europe, it would appear that reality has required them to jettison the redistributive economic policies that Rorty supports in favor of furthering free markets, even endorsing and promoting Thatcherite "privatization."

The most striking example of Rorty's avoidance of any comparison between the views of the Left and the Right emerges in his account of the competing images of American society. Rorty is critical of the New Left for adopting an image of America as a country of sequential victim exploitation. This narrative of American history usually runs from the exploitation of Native Americans to blacks to immigrants to women to gays and lesbians. As noted above, Rorty accepts much of the bill of particulars of this narrative, but argues that the bleak past need not determine the hoped-for future. According to Rorty, the only image presented by the Right in contrast with this narrative as a source for national pride is one of chauvinistic militarism, as acted out in the personae of John Wayne.

Rorty believes that the negative views of America asserted by Martin Heidegger during the period of his philosophical defense of Nazism retained their moral authority. He writes: "When young intellectuals watch John Wayne war movies after reading Heidegger. . .they often become convinced that they live in a violent, inhuman, corrupt country. The ubiquitous image of America developed in fictional form and in media formula, of the United States as a country which provides equality before the law and multiple opportunities so that the poor may achieve the good life, if not for themselves, then for the next generation, is, *mirabile dictu*, simply omitted. This image is, of course, not only a staple of the rhetoric of the Right. Its pervasiveness among all classes of American society has generally been recognized as an obstacle to the formation of class consciousness and to the political success of the parties of the Left in American electoral democracy.

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This refusal to consider the existence of the Right as a possible alternative direction toward achieving our country has bearing for Rorty's own proposal for the restoration of the reformist Left. Rorty ascribes what he terms "the eclipse of the Left" between 1964 and the present to internecine quarrels among leftist factions. Accordingly, his formula for the Left's return to power is the reconciliation among these factions. He fails to consider the need for changing the agenda of the parties of the Left as a prerequisite for any electoral victory.

Ironically, Rorty's discounting of the viability or the success of the non-Left in recent decades is relevant to an evaluation of his criticism of the academic Left. Rorty's charge is that the academic Left, ensconced in the insulated sanctuary of the university, has become a passive spectator, refusing to engage in its needed activist functions in American political coalitions. Yet this criticism may not appreciate the political shrewdness of the academic Left in shaping its significant role in American politics. For the academic Left appears to have adapted the strategy of the Italian Marxist Gramsci, who urged the Left to pursue cultural hegemony from the protected base of the university rather than to engage in a losing confrontation in the political arena. Thus, the academic Left has not joined with the trade unions, as Rorty advises, in a program to counter free-market economics. Instead it has achieved, to a significant degree, a victory in the cultural wars virtually to the point of cultural hegemony, not only in the University but also within elite groups in the media, theater, and publishing, preserving the perspectives of the Left during a period when the programs and policies of socialist and communist movements and states were forced to declare themselves bankrupt. A confirmation of the significance of the academic Left is available through the thought-experiment of imagining the situation in American society during the presidencies of Reagan, Bush, and Clinton were the academic Left not so dominant in the culture wars.

By refusing to join issue with the Right, Rorty sidesteps any need to evaluate the degree to which the United States has already been achieved successfully, through the ways in which it has preserved inherited social and political institutions including limited government, a conservative judicial framework, and free enterprise. His support for change in a radical direction does not derive its legitimacy from any specific bill of particulars against American institutions. Rather, Rorty's appeal is to the ever-present possibility of reforming the status quo by means of the political party of perennial hope. For Rorty, Walt Whitman has been the poet whose theme is that America is a country open to utopian possibilities and John Dewey has been the philosopher who envisioned American

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society as capable of continuous reform. So, the catalyst for Rorty's program for *Achieving Our Country* is the rediscovery and revitalization of the works of Whitman and Dewey.

There can be no disagreement with Rorty that both Dewey's pragmatic philosophy and Whitman's poetry bear within them an optimism about the exceptional potentialities of American society. This observation was brilliantly developed by George Santayana in his lecture "The Genteel Tradition in American Thought," delivered in 1913 in the yet intellectually unformed state of California. Santayana identified philosophical pragmatism and the poetry of Whitman as the key voices in countering the Calvinism indigenous to American classical thought.

Yet if there is little room for disagreement in characterizing Dewey and Whitman's enduring contributions to the sense of American possibilities in their time, there can be difference in opinion on the relevance of their message for the 1990s and beyond. With the changes in American morals of the 1920s, the urgency or appropriateness of counter-Calvinism may be doubtful; after the lifestyle revolution of the 1960s, invoking the anti-Puritanical theses characteristic of Dewey or Whitman would appear redundant. So, without denying Rorty's appreciation of Dewey or Whitman as American icons, it is difficult to follow his argument that they are significant figures in the current political contest.

Rorty's championing of Dewey's thought as a continuing motivation for optimism about the American future, even as a post-Vietnam restorative of national pride, may be anachronistic, but it reflects accurately Deweyan themes. On the other hand, his denial of the objectivity of moral and political judgments seems to betray a central feature of the Deweyan canon. Rorty, contrary to Dewey, rejects the view that a process of rational inquiry can, by appealing to relevant facts, resolve a conflict between competing moral or political opinions. Rorty compares the political positions of Elijah Muhammad and James Baldwin, but concludes:

> I do not think there is any point in arguing that Elijah Muhammad made the right decision and Baldwin the wrong one, or vice versa. . . . Both decisions are intelligible. Either can be made plausible. But there are no neutral, objective criteria which dictate one rather than the other.

Accordingly, Rorty finds himself unable to condemn the racism embedded in the political thought of some leaders of the Black Islamic movement, even while specifically citing Elijah Muhammad's belief that "the white people started out as homunculi created by a diabolical scientist."

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For Rorty, the falsity of the factual claims advanced within a political philosophy does not lead to its refutation. Rorty's account has the virtue of preserving his general philosophical commitment to pluralism with its tolerance for diverse opinion. It renders problematic, however, the grounds for his own extreme rejection of competing political directions.

Characteristically, John Dewey interpreted competing political claims as quasi-scientific hypotheses which could be resolved by a rational community of inquiry. For a Deweyan concerned with deciding the issue raised by differences on political policy between James Baldwin and Elijah Muhammad, not only the positions of these two figures but the appropriate "hypotheses" generated from Richard Wright or Ralph Ellison (to complete what Henry Gates has called the "trinity" of black authors), as well as the relevant "hypotheses" of a Thomas Sowell or Clarence Thomas, would have to be admitted into the process of free inquiry.

A pluralist like Rorty can assert that Dewey erred in his belief that there was a scientific method capable of resolving disagreement among deeply held moral and political attitudes. Yet it seems to me that Rorty both misinterprets John Dewey and commits a philosophical error in not recognizing the way in which factual truth or falsity relates to the objective legitimacy of the acceptance or rejection of political views.

Rorty's attractive strategy is to bypass reference to the truth of competing historical representations, Left or Right, or to the validity of conflicting economic theories, Marxist or Hayekian, appealing to literary or fictional expressions in which views of politics or of human nature are embedded. Thus, Rorty contrasts contemporary novels of "national self-mockery and self-disgust" with the "socialist novels of the first half of the century" that were formulations of "national hope": *The Jungle, An American Tragedy*, and *The Grapes of Wrath*. Rorty argues that these works by Upton Sinclair, Theodore Dreiser, and John Steinbeck serve to show that the rhetoric of individualism fostered by industrial capitalism "should be replaced by one in which America is destined to become the first cooperative commonwealth, the first classless society."

Yet there is a gap between the appreciation of these novels as testaments of their times and their use as guideposts for future political direction. There is the specific historical point that Sinclair, Dreiser, and Steinbeck themselves came to differ sharply on America's political future. There is the general point that one need not be a literary deconstructionist to recognize that even didactic novels lend themselves to the derivation of different moral and political lessons. In the case of *The Grapes of Wrath*, there is a stunning illustration of this difference as

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related by Raissa Orlova, the chief literary figure responsible for the translation of American fiction in the Soviet Union in the 1930s.

The community of ideological writers in the Soviet Union were enthusiastic about the prospect of having a Russian translation of *The Grapes of Wrath*, the great novel demonstrating the depths of poverty under capitalism and pointing to the wave of future American socialism. Yet no less a figure than Stalin himself blocked the translation. Finally, the reasons for the veto emerged. Stalin had realized that the ordinary Russian reading this novel would not be appalled by its narrative of rural poverty, farm foreclosure, and the Okies' road to cheap migrant labor. Instead, in Stalin's view they would react with incredulity to the fact that the impoverished American peasant could pile his goods into *his own owned private car* and take to the road to California to find work.

Shifting the referents of the discussion from political and economic policies toward literary models increases the resonance of this book, but it does not eliminate the necessity, so assiduously avoided by Rorty, of considering the adversary position. Sinclair, Dreiser, and Steinbeck represent one value cluster in America's literary inheritance. Yet the achievement of this country also includes the novels of Herman Melville and Henry James. Any chart of the American future at the end of the twentieth century should consider not only the socialist authors' critique of capitalism, but the analysis of human nature, with its potential for evil and the possibilities for regression, that are implicit in the writings of the American masters. It would malign Melville or James to read their novels as carrying a message for political conservatism. Yet, in achieving the American future, the moral lessons of these works—so contradictory of visions of socialist transformation of human nature—have at least as important a place as do those of Sinclair, Dreiser, and Steinbeck. Whether Rorty's directive for the American future is traced from his views on American history and economics or from his appeal to American literature, the underlying criticism remains that he does not take into account either the negative evidence or the contrary themes.

Rorty is a strong advocate and deeply committed spokesman for the Left who can draw on multiple intellectual resources. His voice expresses the sincerity of his conviction as well as his disdain for the opposition. Yet, in striking contrast, there is the absence of any substantive grounds for the conviction or for the disdain. Based on this book, the conclusion would have to be that the Left claims the right—but has not shown the authority—to be able to speak to the issues of our times.

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PAUL HOLLANDER

Thinking about Kosovo in Northampton, Massachusetts and Budapest, Hungary

In late May 1999, when I began writing this article, it was by no means clear how and when NATO's airwar against Milosevic would end. The consensus seemed to be that it would end in some sort of a stalemate; or worse, that NATO would not achieve its objectives: the refugees would not return, NATO troops wouldn't enter the province in substantial numbers, and Yugoslavia would keep effective control over it. By August 1999, however, it was clear that things had turned out quite differently.

The Kosovo crisis coincided with a trip I made to Budapest, enabling me to reflect in a new setting on the unanticipated outcome of the air campaign, the American and Hungarian responses to it, and the moral and psychological questions it has raised. The larger issues of the Kosovo conflict include our notorious and chronic inability to predict the outcome and byproducts of major historical-political events. Western policymakers had not anticipated that the bombing campaign would accelerate and intensify "ethnic cleansing," or that Milosevic would be able to endure over two months of bombardment. It was assumed that air strikes by themselves would not compel the Serbs to give in to NATO demands.

Many mistakes were made in the conduct of the war, despite its unexpected success. These included the NATO declaration that no ground troops would be used; the initial "pinprick" bombardment; NATO's going to exceptional lengths to avoid casualties, at the expense of the lives of Albanian and Serb civilians; and the withholding of support from the Kosovo Liberation Army, the only force on the ground that could have slowed down, if not prevented, the ethnic cleansing.

Nonetheless, NATO prevailed in the end: Milosevic withdrew his forces, NATO troops entered Kosovo, and the refugees returned. Unresolved issues remain, including the future status of and conditions within Kosovo as well as the survival of the Milosevic regime; a variety of moral, political, and historical questions also deserve further attention.

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IT WAS NOT DIFFICULT to identify Milosevic and his regime with political and moral evil. I also found the behavior of many "ordinary" Serbs repugnant: their participation in ethnic cleansing was one of its preconditions, since the removal and brutalization of more than a million people requires a large number of willing and eager participants. The scenes of Serbian crowds engulfed in self-righteous nationalistic frenzy on the streets of Belgrade were also singularly unappealing ("people at rock concert rallies in Belgrade and other cities, dancing in defiance of NATO and in support of the man they call Slobo," as the *New York Times* described it). Images of aggressive self-assertion joined with maudlin affirmations of collective victimhood. Mark Mazower of Princeton University observed that "hatred of Albanians is not something invented by Milosevic; it has deep roots in Serbian political culture. . . .Serb nationalism [is] resentful and narcissistic, claiming victimhood for itself and indifferent to the sufferings of the real victims." Slavenka Draculič argued (in a Hungarian publication in June) that from the Serbian point of view Albanians have long been invisible:

> If they were noted at all it was only as some sort of an abstract entity. . .rather than fellow citizens endowed with the same rights . . . .[Serbs] seem incapable of identifying with the sufferings of people they do not regard as being of equal stature. . .the sufferings of their fellow citizens do not elicit any human emotion. . .the prejudices toward Albanians are comparable to those directed in other cultures at Jews, blacks, or gypsies.

I resonated to Daniel Goldhagen's analogy between Nazi-German, World War II Japanese, and Serb behavior, although the scale and quality of the three sets of misdeeds were quite different. As Goldhagen observed,

> In all three instances. . .the vicious treatment of the victims has been supported by a large majority. . .that was beholden to an ideology which called for the conquest of Lebensraum. . . . They believed fanatically in the rightness of these actions. . . .In all three instances the crimes. . . were carried out by ordinary members of the societies. . .when their governments moved them to do so. In all three instances the majority of the people whose country was committing these enormous crimes deluded themselves into believing

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> that they were the real victims and that any attempt, such as bombing, to halt the. . .mass murdering was the real crime.

At the same time I disagreed with those who spoke of genocide or holocaust in Kosovo on the apparent assumption that no moral indignation or compassion can be generated in our times without invoking genocide or the Holocaust.

The Kosovo war was one of those historical events which compel new reflections on old and unresolved questions of politics and morality—among them, how groups and individuals decide which forces or actors represent good and evil in a major historical conflict. Under what circumstances are certain forms of behavior deemed morally abhorrent, acceptable, praiseworthy, or matters of profound indifference? Why is the premeditated murder of unarmed civilians a matter of essential and justifiable self-defense for some and a ruthless massacre for others? Why are socially conscious bystanders, among them intellectuals (presumed to be sensitive to all injustice), sometimes willing to rationalize political violence, while on other, similar occasions, they respond with outrage and indignation? How do people, especially those in power, calculate the costs and benefits of political violence and evaluate the proper relationship between the ends and means?

Kosovo certainly provided abundant examples of the readily available human capacity to dehumanize others; Serbs and Albanians excelled in regarding one another as unworthy of any humane sentiment or consideration. The victimizers were for the most part the Serbs, but Kosovar Albanians would have reciprocated, given the opportunity; they began to do so after their return, if on a far smaller scale and far less methodically. The Kosovo conflict also offered new illustrations of the familiar contemporary tendency to confuse and conflate self-defense and aggression. Once more the obvious aggressors, the Serbs claimed to have been victimized and under attack even before the NATO bombing. Serbs deprived of electricity and gasoline equated their condition with that of Albanians who were murdered, raped, robbed, evicted, and reduced to refugee status.

An aspect of the violence in Kosovo that has received little attention is the part played by revenge in political conflicts and the relish and clear conscience with which human beings harm one another in its pursuit. Kosovo seems to reaffirm that a durable lust for revenge is an important factor in political conflict. The crisis also suggested that there is a connection between the quality of political conflicts and the personalities of those instigating them. Former ambassador Walter Zimmerman observed

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that Milosevic is "uncommonly ruthless. . .[and displays] an insensitivity toward suffering and a coldness toward individual humans. He had a tendency to treat people as pawns on a political chessboard. . . .For such a man, the use of force to rid Kosovo of its entire population would have presented no moral dilemma." What types of societies, cultures, or historical circumstances allow such flawed human beings to seize and retain power? It is a question historians and social scientists should continue to ponder.

Besides the all-too-familiar motives and aspects of mass violence and brutality, there was also something unusual about the Kosovo conflict: the absence of conventionally defined or easily identifiable "national interest" at stake for NATO and the U.S. Many critics of the involvement were opposed to it for precisely that reason. Milosevic and the remains of Yugoslavia did not militarily or politically threaten the U.S. or the countries of NATO; Yugoslavia was not capable of disrupting oil supplies; there were no prospects that any "dominos" might fall. According to this view, the brutalization of Albanians in Kosovo was regrettable, but there was plenty of inter-ethnic and other brutality around the globe, and the U.S. (or NATO) could not be expected to police the whole world; moreover, the Balkans were a notorious "hotbed" or "tinderbox" of "ancient ethnic hatreds" which the U.S. could not prevent from exploding from time to time.

If national interest as generally understood provided a poor explanation for the U.S. and NATO involvement, what did? For critics of the United States, the idea that the U.S. would get involved in a war thousands of miles away on largely moral or humanitarian grounds was implausible or outright preposterous. And yet, strangely enough, this was a military intervention dominated by moral and humanitarian considerations, in which national interest, as usually defined, played a small part.

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THE KOSOVO CRISIS produced interesting and unpredictable alignments and splits of opinion. Republicans and other Clinton-haters opposed the intervention largely because it was "Clinton's war," but a more old-fashioned, reflexive isolationism has also reemerged on the right. In the *New Republic*, Jack Kemp called the NATO intervention "an international Waco," while Patrick Buchanan professed to be ashamed of his country on account of the bombing. It was hard to know if principles, or moral principles, played any part in this rhetoric. Many of the critics

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among both politicians and the general public had trouble supporting military involvement in a part of the world they had difficulty finding on the map.

Political affiliation and prior stands taken did not predict attitudes toward U.S. involvement. Among the critics of NATO intervention were such otherwise dissonant political-intellectual figures as Patrick Buchanan, Jimmy Carter, Noam Chomsky, Daniel Ellsberg, Tom Hayden, David Horowitz, Jack Kemp, and Trent Lott. Among the supporters of NATO were similarly incompatible figures like Saul Bellow, Zbigniev Brzezinski, Geraldine Ferraro, Tom Harkin, Tony Judt, Jeanne Kirkpatrick, William Kristol, Anthony Lewis, David Rieff, Susan Sontag, Elie Wiesel, and Leon Wieseltier.

In many critiques of the airwar, memories of Vietnam loomed large. For Tom Hayden the parallels were obvious: "Bombs couldn't bring peace in Vietnam," so why would they in Kosovo? There was the familiar "quagmire" imagery, and references to "a new [U.S.] imperialism" and "America as the world's policeman." Critics on the left (besides Hayden) included Noam Chomsky, Ramsey Clark, and Jesse Jackson, guardians of 1960s sensibilities (predisposed to solidarity with the perceived victims of American power), and other critics of America who rarely encountered a group, nation, or political movement hostile to the United States to which they did not feel drawn. They had been convinced for a long time that a society as immoral and unjust as that of the United States has no business judging the behavior of others, let alone using its military power to impose its will on them. Chomsky (in a Harper's article) compared what he regarded as the spurious humanitarian involvement of NATO and the U.S. to Japan's invasion of Manchuria, Mussolini's attack on Ethiopia, and Hitler's grab of the Sudetenland. Remarkably enough, he also took the opportunity to criticize the U.S. for not having taken stronger actions against Pol Pot (an illustration of its lack of moral credentials in the fight against human rights violations), although he himself defended Pol Pot's regime while it was in power, and scorned refugee reports of its atrocities. Chomsky also suggested that a "rational person" would find it difficult to judge more severely "the Iranian record of intervention and terror than that of the United States."

The NATO airwar often stimulated the moral equivalence response. For many critics the accidental bombing casualties among the Serb civilians carried the same moral weight as the thousands of Albanians murdered and hundreds of thousands methodically plundered and expelled from Kosovo. On his return from Belgrade, Jesse Jackson evenhandedly

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noted that "we demonize Milosevic. . . .they demonize President Clinton." To prove that he was above such simplifications he took the hand of Milosevic and invited him to join in a prayer circle.

Marjorie Cohn, an antiwar activist in 1969 and currently a law professor at Stanford, "attacked the war. . .as another case of American imperialism," according to the *New York Times*, "saying the United States 'will protect its markets and international influence at the expense of whatever small country happens to get in the way'. . .ending her speech. . .with 'Power to the People!'" James Rule, a sociologist writing in *Dissent*, explained the intervention as reflecting "the need for a credible enemy" on the part of the American military and other elites. He suggested that repression in Kosovo became unacceptable to U.S. policymakers only when it "threatened to roil relations among such crucial U.S. allies as Greece and Macedonia."

For other critics of American involvement in Vietnam, the differences between the two situations were apparent and significant: trying to prevent the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo was a good cause; fighting the Vietcong was not. The bombing of Yugoslavia was justified by its objectives even if civilians were sometimes hurt. As for not intervening elsewhere and at other times, "past irresponsibility in the face of genocide. . .[is not] a warrant and justification for repeating the mistake," Tony Judt argued, as did Stanley Hoffman: "The fact that the U.S. and its allies failed to respond to cases of genocide or ethnic cleansing all over the world. . .is not a reason for passivity in Kosovo; it is a reason for remorse."

Susan Sontag was willing to confront the charge that the NATO intervention was "Eurocentric," and that higher value was placed on the lives of Europeans than on those of Africans or Asians:

> Yes, to care about the fate of the people in Kosovo is Eurocentric and what is wrong with that? But is not the accusation of Eurocentrism itself just one more vestige of European presumption. . . of Europe's universalist mission: that every part of the globe has a claim on Europe's attention? If several African states cared enough about the genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda. . .to intervene militarily, say, under the leadership of Nelson Mandela, would we have criticized this initiative as being Afrocentric? Would we have asked what right these states have to intervene in Rwanda when they have done nothing on behalf of the Kurds and the Tibetans?

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Jews in particular seemed to have been torn between conflicting emotions. On the one hand, some Jewish critics of the war—and especially those of the older generations—felt supportive of beleaguered Yugoslavia. They remembered the heroic Serb partisans of World War II fighting the Nazis and other anti-Semitic forces, such as the Croat Ustashis. On the other side were Jews who supported NATO because they perceived the horror of ethnic cleansing as being similar to the Holocaust: "Hanging over Mr. Wiesel's visit [to refugee camps in Macedonia] was the phrase 'never again,' " reported the *New York Times*. "'I've learned something from my experiences,' Mr. Wiesel said. 'When evil shows its face, you don't wait. . . .You must intervene.'" Anthony Lewis quoted Vaclav Havel, another supporter of NATO intervention: "Kosovo has no oilfields to be coveted; no member nation in the [NATO] alliance has any territorial demands on Kosovo. . . .It is fighting out of concern for the fate of others. . .because no decent person can stand by and watch the systematic state-directed murder." Lewis added: "NATO air attacks have killed Serbian civilians. That is regrettable. But it is a price that has to be paid when a nation falls in behind a criminal leader."

Both the critics and supporters of the war alleged that the credibility if not survival of NATO was at stake and led to the intervention. But "credibility" became an issue *after* NATO's involvement. The compelling reasons for intervention were the memories of Bosnia (NATO's failure to prevent ethnic cleansing and mass murders) and the ample television coverage of the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo. It was by no means essential for NATO and the U.S. to get involved in either Bosnia or Kosovo, except for the moral-psychological pressure exerted by the visual images of brutalized Kosovo Albanians and (earlier) Bosnians.

What was there to gain for the U.S. from independence or autonomy for Kosovo? From militarily defeating the Serbs? From spending huge amounts on the military campaign, on assisting the refugees and their resettlement? From stationing more troops in that part of the world? The desire to intimidate Russia has been suspected by some, both in this country and Hungary. But why would NATO seek to intimidate in this manner a thoroughly weakened and demoralized Russia, dependent on Western handouts? If anything, NATO airstrikes stiffened the backbone of Russia, reviving its nationalism and hostility toward the U.S. and the West. Solzhenitsyn's explanation personified the resurgent, resentful nationalism in his part of the world: "NATO wants to impose its order on the world. And Yugoslavia is needed as a terrible example. 'We will punish Yugoslavia and the whole world will tremble.' And that was not

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all. He [Solzhenitsyn] also said that he saw no difference in the behavior of NATO and Hitler."

Perhaps the greedy multinational corporations were seeking new markets behind the military action; but they were already marketing their products in these regions. Did NATO or the U.S. seek some geopolitical advantage? New bases? NATO troops were already in Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Albania would have welcomed NATO troops without the Kosovo crisis. Hungary is already a NATO member providing military bases; Bulgaria and Romania are anxious to join.

None of these possibilities carried much conviction. In the end, implausible as it might be, one is left with a preponderance of indications that moral-humanitarian considerations best explain the NATO involvement. It appears that both public opinion (or large parts of it) and the political elites in the U.S. and other NATO countries reluctantly and belatedly came to the conclusion that the large scale of methodical mistreatment of the Kosovar Albanians justified military action even if no such action took place in other parts of the world on corresponding occasions. These idealistic motives were somewhat tainted by the determination not to risk any NATO lives for the good cause.

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My trip to Hungary in late May, with the airwar still in high gear, provided both new perspectives and confirmation that responses to the moral outrages of our times are highly patterned and influenced by factors other than the magnitude of the outrages in question. While in Budapest I took every opportunity to discuss Kosovo with the natives—intellectuals and public figures as well as people of no such distinction, including taxi drivers, old friends, and members of my family. I also read the press and listened to radio and television news. Certain parallels in the attitude of Hungarians and Americans on different sides of the issue became immediately apparent.

In Hungary, as in the U.S., those opposed to the ruling (right-of-center) government were opposed to the war because it was supported by the government they disliked. In Hungary, too, the liberals were deeply and unpredictably divided. Agnes Heller, the philosopher and former disciple of Georg Lukacs, strongly supported NATO and its airstrikes, while György (George) Konrad, the well-known writer and prominent dissident during the communist regime, objected to them vehemently.

Among the Hungarian critics of NATO, intellectuals or not, one sentiment dominated: firm disbelief that such a military campaign could

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have been undertaken on purely or even largely humanitarian or moral grounds. For understandable historical reasons, Hungarians, both educated and less educated, are inclined to profound cynicism in public-political matters. They were systematically lied to during forty years of communist rule, and the three freely elected governments since 1989 have not inspired much confidence either, since they have tolerated or abetted corruption. Hungarian history as a whole lends little support to positive conceptions of public morality and politics, as this small country endured a succession of invaders, occupiers, and betrayals. The selfless heroes of Hungarian history usually lost. There is a psychology of suspicion in a small and weak country toward the big and powerful—in this case the U.S. and NATO. A skeptical moral relativism is an understandable response to decades of fraudulent official certainties. Julia Lang wrote (in *Nepszabadsag*, the most widely read daily newspaper):

> It has become acceptable that the superplanes of the Good Alliance should nightly fly over our heads to smash the Evil Empire and we must rejoice over this. Because at last we are on the side of Virtue. Because it feels so good to believe that this is all there is to it: that we cannot allow genocide to go on here, in the middle of Europe. . . .Did we appoint ourselves as the best? Are we designing the new world order, deciding between truth and falsehood, Good and Evil? On what grounds?

Another journalist, Gyula Hegyi, asked in the daily *Magyar Hirlap* why the Serbs have been singled out as the symbol and repository of evil in the world. He theorized that this happened because Serb nationalism collided with the interests of "globalism" (a murky and overused concept in Hungary as in the United States); the Serbs could not have been allowed to challenge these interests with impunity. Conspiracy theories included the belief that Hungary was admitted to NATO a short while before the airstrikes began only to provide bases for the bombardment and possible ground invasion. While a majority did vote in favor of joining NATO, many were jittery about the specific obligations membership would entail. There was also disbelief that the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade could have been accidental—an attitude combining an overestimation of the military power and technology of the United States with some conspiratorial scenario: if it had not been decided upon at the highest level, it could have been some rogue element in the CIA! Many Hungarians also voiced the suspicion that the Lewinsky affair motivated President Clinton to push for intervention to divert attention from his problem, as was the case in the well-known movie.

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Weapons testing as the motive for the bombardment also cropped up, as well as reference to the destruction of copper mines in Yugoslavia in order to profitably rebuild them by Western companies. A distinguished writer speculated in a personal conversation that the Jewish background of Madeline Albright and Wesley Clark provided the psychological basis for interventionist sentiment as a moralistic overcompensation for downplaying their Jewish identity. (A similar view about Albright was also expressed in the *New Republic*.)

Jewishness played a part in Hungary, too, in the shaping of attitudes toward the war. Jews who disliked the government for being right-wing had little sympathy for NATO action. Those like Agnes Heller, who associated ethnic cleansing with the Holocaust, took the opposite position. One young historian argued that the most clear-cut opposition to the war was to be found at the political extremes, but only the minuscule far-left "Workers Party" actually supported Milosevic.

There was a nationalistic component of the Hungarian concerns with the war: the Hungarian minority of some three hundred thousand in Vojvodina, which borders on southern Hungary. Many Hungarians felt that the bombs falling on places like Novi Sad did particular damage to the lives of Hungarians. There was also the apprehension that enraged Serb nationalists might, after Kosovo, turn on the Hungarian minority and repress them further (they too had lost their autonomous status under Milosevic). Future relations with the Serb neighbor was another concern. And there were also apprehensions that Hungary would become as subservient to NATO as it used to be to the Warsaw Pact. During my visit it was reported that a man telephoned airport authorities in Budapest, where the NATO tanker planes were based, threatening to shoot down one of them with a handheld missile. There was also indignation about a tanker plane that jettisoned its fuel over cultivated fields when it developed engine trouble. A lack of warmth toward the Kosovar Albanians was sometimes discernible, reflecting an undercurrent of antipathy toward their Islamic religious affiliations and values. Hungarians do not see how the latter can be reconciled with the Western, European values and attitudes they cherish. Serbs, at least, are Christian.

The disputes and disagreements among Hungarian intellectuals raised the same questions as those asked by their American counterparts. People of comparable reputation, integrity, and apparent moral sensibility disagreed wildly and often angrily, their moral compasses pointing in diametrically opposed directions. George Konrad's long and angry article in *Nepszabadsag* (first published in a major German paper) suggested that he was more upset by the NATO bombing of Serb civilians and

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infrastructure than by the Serbs' ethnic cleansing, not that he ignored the latter. In his view it was a case of "the big beating up on the small," "the greatest powers of the world conducting airwar against a little Central European country." He wrote, "when the big beats up on the small I don't root for the big." He was put off by the similarity between militaristic computer games and the computerized advanced technology of high-level aerial bombardment. He asked, why should "the bridges of Ujvidek (Novi Sad) be destroyed in defense of the Albanians?" and argued that "it is a big mistake to bomb human beings in the name of human rights."

In this as in other, similar disputes in Hungary (and elsewhere), the direction of moral indignation was predetermined by conflicting beliefs about who was the underdog—or the morally privileged, true underdog; the most deserving victim—and by different notions of who threatened whom. But such perceptions are highly idiosyncratic. The Nazis felt genuinely threatened by the Jews, Stalin by the kulaks, the Hutus by the Tutsis, the Serbs by the Albanians. Whose perception of threat is the most authentic? To put it differently, attitudes in Hungary as in the U.S. were colored by conflicting ideas about "radical evil in the world." Susan Sontag came to believe in the existence of such evil and located it in the Milosevic regime. Konrad, like many liberals, probably does not subscribe to belief in the existence of such evil, which is why he optimistically suggested that the Kosovo conflict could have been settled by non-military measures and policies aimed at "loosening up, domesticating [the Yugoslav regime]by the Red-Cross style rescue of human beings" instead of the strategy chosen by NATO of "crushing, punishing, and humiliating." Konrad's views were supported by the Academy of Arts of Germany, of which he has been president for the last two years.

Péter Nádas, another well-known novelist, disagreed with him. He saw the Serbs as vastly more powerful than the Kosovar Albanians, and focused on *their* victimhood. He questioned Konrad's pacifism "as one which supports the rights of the stronger rather than those of the weaker just because there is in the world a power yet stronger"—that is, NATO. Nádas rejected "the placing of an equation mark. . .between NATO airstrikes and the activities of the death-commando units carrying out their depredations on behalf of the Serb state."

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THE KOSOVO WAR, with its many victims and incomplete resolution, leaves one with mixed feelings. There is ample reason for gloom as one

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contemplates the ease and abandon with which human beings brutalize one another under the guidance of a mendacious group of leaders who managed to stay in power; there is new evidence of how easily tribalistic nationalism becomes murderous. Among those witnessing the conflict, many intellectuals both at home and abroad fell prey to notions of moral equivalence. Their attitudes seemed to have been influenced by old, irrelevant images of who their "real" enemies are: technology, capitalism, modernity, the West, the United States, NATO—whoever was designated as the "top dog," the authentic victimizer. On the other hand, this time more Western intellectuals—including many who in the past reflexively blamed the U.S. first—recognized that even the United States can try to do the right thing, and that the power of the Western world, as organized in NATO, could and should be used for a good cause.

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KAREN WILKIN

At the Galleries

LET'S GET IT OVER WITH. The Brooklyn Museum's controversial exhibition, *Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection*, was far from sensational—in any sense. The outbursts of the mayor and the media notwithstanding, the show was full of neither "sick stuff" nor blasphemous images. There were plenty of works obviously intended to shock, mainly by displaying naughty bits and disgusting materials (identifiable only if you read the labels), but most of it was, at best, an adolescent testing of limits. A lot of it looked like art-school work, albeit art-school work in an age of self-promotion, theory-bolstered glibness, and cynical calculation—work that broadcast a self-conscious message of "look how bad I can be," carefully calibrated to attract attention without alienating dealers or collectors. (Given the curricula of most current art schools, that message may be better rendered as "look how transgressive I can be.") Since Saatchi's taste—like that of most current art schools—runs to conceptually based works requiring verbal explanations for their premises to be intelligible, *Sensation* consisted, for the most part, of rather predictable one-liners and indifferently executed illustrations of not very good ideas.

Nor was *Sensation* a showcase of exciting new art. Most of it was not only puerile, but also dull. The Chapman brothers' life-sized, bizarrely fused models of naked children were typical. Complete with eyelashes, wigs, and sneakers, they resembled mutant shop mannequins, despite fleeting invocations of Old-Master antecedents for the groupings and Surrealist precedents for the oddly combined bodies. Despite the Chapmans' punning substitutions of genitalia for ears and noses, their sculptures' closest relatives seemed to be not kiddie-porn photographs, but sentimental Victorian groups of wistful moppets, via Madame Tussaud; the results were just as dispiriting as this dreary lineage suggests. Yet another hyper-realist sculptor, Ron Mueck, provided one of *Sensation*'s most potent works in his weirdly affecting *Dead Dad*, a frighteningly life-like, smaller than life-sized naked figure that managed to fuse material presence, rich associations, and wrenching feeling. Interestingly, it was *Dead Dad*'s smallness that removed it from the realm of virtuoso naturalism by intensifying its fragility and strangeness, which, in turn, emphasized the subject's mortality; a vastly oversized head by Mueck

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was merely *big*, without other notable qualities. Exceptional, too, were Richard Billingham's unexpectedly compelling, detached but sympathetic photographs of his appalling family—updated versions of English "Kitchen Sink school" images, with the squalor factor exponentially increased and an additional layer of discomfort added by the *verité* factor of the medium.

The art world being the art world, several of the best known (or these days, most notorious) artists in *Sensation*, Jenny Saville, Chris Ofili, and Rachel Whiteread, had solo shows of recent work concurrent with the extravaganza at the Brooklyn Museum. In Brooklyn, Saville's big, fleshy, loosely brushed nudes stood out as explorations of the expressive possibilities of the materials and particularities of painting issues, but her immense canvases at Gagosian were disappointing. Here, Saville's huge, mostly female figures seemed scale-less, despite their size. Like Mueck's head in Brooklyn, their gigantism seemed arbitrary, not a response to inner necessity. A curious sameness prevailed: the same low viewpoint, the same family of hues. Saville's palette seems restricted by her painting flesh—it can be pinker, yellower, or grayer, but remains within a constant, narrow range. Heightening color doesn't help; a reddish head refused to take its place in what was otherwise one of the strongest pictures at Gagosian, a squeezed vertical composition of two boldly painted torsos, one all thrusting belly and breasts, the other a half-hidden fragment, like a conjoined twin or a subordinate alter ego. Still, the picture was noteworthy for the way intense plasticity was achieved by vigorous paint handling. In others, Saville's bulbous forms seemed flattened, as though the camera's eye replaced the artist's, while paint remained inertly on the surface, as though the figures were covered with cake frosting. (For what it's worth, male critics seemed to respond positively to these pictures.)

The much-maligned Ofili's show at Gavin Brown's Enterprise confirmed that, far from being rude or abrasive, the young Nigerian-British painter's work is easy on the eye and perhaps even too eager to please. Ofili's carefully made, glittering pictures evoke a variety of African traditions, past and present: textile patterns, body ornamentation, and those charming, naive hairdresser's shop signs and marvelous sculptural coffins that embody the deceased's occupation and/or fondest dreams. Ofili filters these references through what must now be called recent white-Western traditions, cannily exploiting the contrast between throwaway, vernacular imagery and labor-intensive, meticulous facture to energize his bright, cheeky paintings. Yet in some of his most successful pictures (seen in *Sensation*), Ofili dispensed with explicit, cartoon-like

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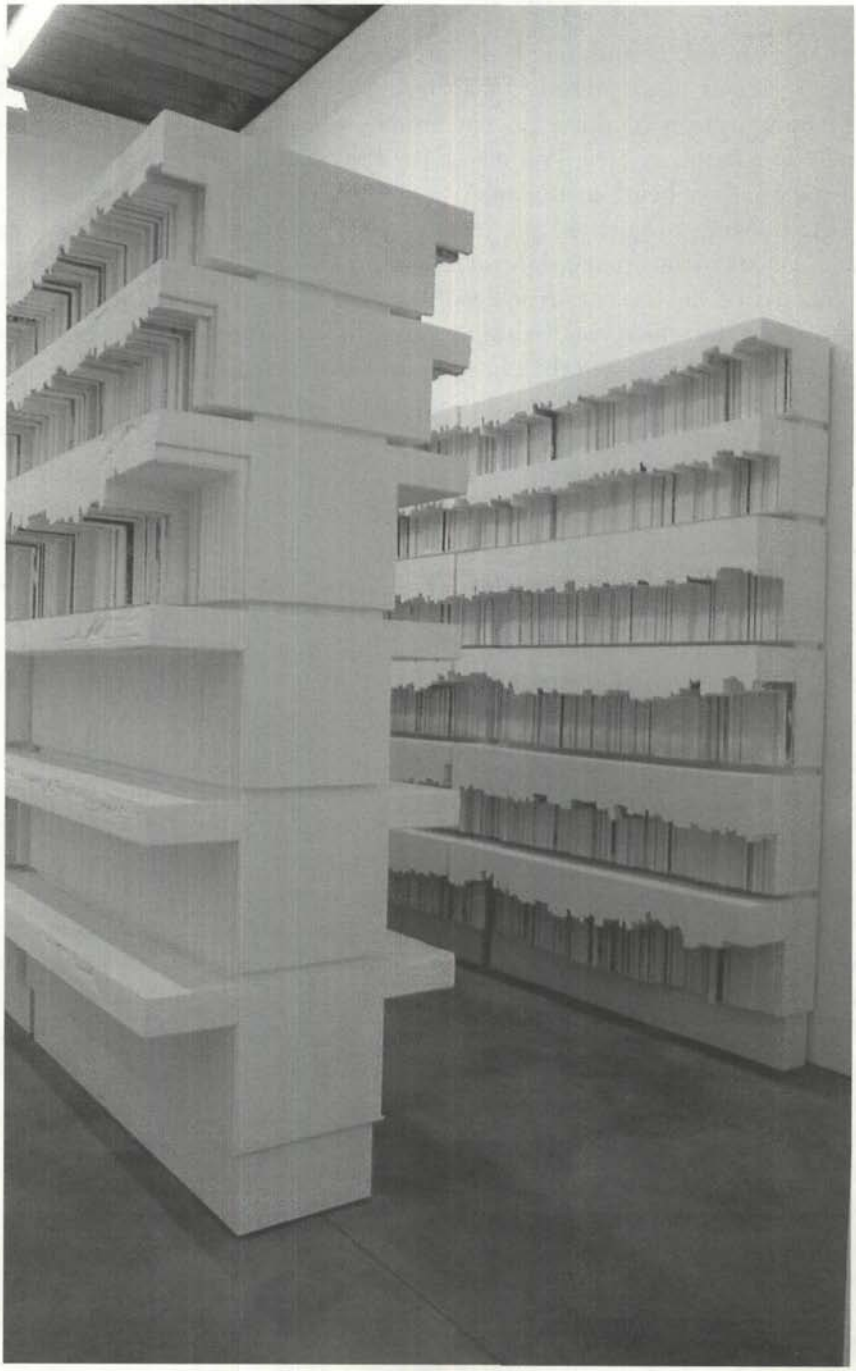

Untitled (Library) (1999) by Rachel Whiteread. Plaster, polystyrene, steel. 105 by 208 by 96 inches. Courtesy of Luhring Augustine.

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images in favor of abstract, all-over, textile-like expanses that made the point more subtly and held your interest longer. The elephant dung, by the by, seems more gimmick than necessity. What's problematic is not the composition of those brown lumps, but that Ofili's insistence on including them, as "feet" on which the canvas rests or as compositional elements, risks being formulaic.

At Luhring Augustine, Whiteread's installation of pristine, gleaming white casts of mortuary slabs arranged in an open grid was, as can be expected of this inventive sculptor, elegant and, at first acquaintance, absorbing. But once you became aware of the minor variations between paired forms, registered the illusionistic shifts provoked by edges curved at different angles, and noted the repetitions, the piece lost much of its impact. A series of matte white plaster casts of the spaces between rows of bookshelves, enlivened by what appeared to be traces of the colors of the bindings, was more engaging in the long term, partly because of the complexity of the forms revealed by Whiteread's process. Surprisingly, the ragged, lacy profiles created by books of unequal height, coupled with those inexplicable bits of color, made the schematic rows read as remains of an irrational Carpenter's Gothic architecture. Whiteread has real sensitivity to the qualities of materials and an understanding of sculptural presence, so much so that her poetic, eloquent pieces in *Sensation* raised the whole level of the exhibition. But the works at Luhring Augustine suggested that the conceptual basis of her sculptures is beginning to overwhelm the results; the fact of cataloging the unseen negative spaces that define our ordinary existence seems to have taken precedence over the unexpected poetry of what is revealed.

The brouhaha in Brooklyn may have gotten most of the press last season but anyone who troubled to track down less publicized exhibitions was well rewarded, especially anyone interested in non-ironic, thoughtful abstract painting. *Mirabile dictu*, serious younger artists are making it and serious galleries are showing it, even championing it. Witness the track record of Elizabeth Harris, which since moving to Chelsea has quietly established itself as a necessary regular stop for anyone who cares about good abstract painting (or good figurative painting, for that matter)—as Pat Lipsky's fall exhibition there made clear. Lipsky is no newcomer. Almost thirty years ago, she was hailed as one of a group of young, fluent abstract color painters to watch closely, and she has been working steadily and intelligently ever since. Throughout her career, Lipsky's real strength has been as a colorist. A recent series of dense, juicy grid-paintings explored every conceivable permutation of the meaning of "black," which, paradoxical as it sounds, became in her

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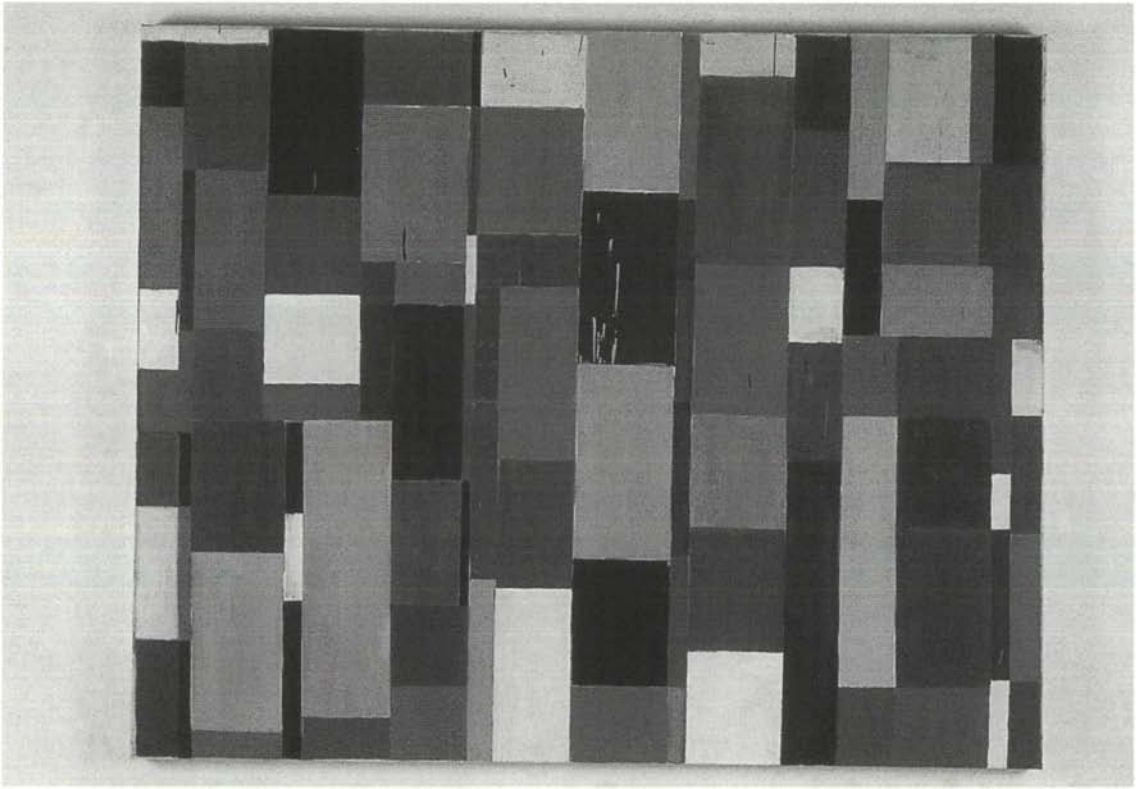

First One (1998) by Pat Lipsky. Acrylic, alkyd resin. 59 3/8 by 72 7/8 inches. Courtesy of Elizabeth Harris Gallery.

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hands an exploration of the full spectrum (quite possibly including ultraviolet and infrared); those black squares seemed to change colors at you looked. Lipsky's newest works made the chromatic implications of these black paintings explicit through a range of seductive, radiant "off" hues, from dull cinnabar reds to murky greens to chalky blues and more. This lush, cool palette was deployed on irregular, overscaled grids, stacks of unequal rectangles and squares whose dimensions seemed to expand and contract, like the space in Mannerist pictures. In some, Lipsky emphasized the fact of painting and the liquidity of pigment, letting drips and swipes of paint humanize the carefully ordered layout of the canvas. If this sounds theoretical and preconceived, think again. Lipsky is an essentially intuitive artist who obviously allows her accumulated experience of looking and painting to determine what she does, rather than calculating in advance. Klee and Matisse, she says, have always meant a great deal to her. On one level, Lipsky's recent, resonant canvases could be read as homage to her chosen ancestors—which takes nothing away from their impact as lyrical, wordless improvisations on private obsessions.

Gregory Coates's mixed media paintings at Cynthia Broan, in a show entitled "Between the Lines," were an effective amalgam of the traditions of High Modernism and a kind of street-smart opportunism. I don't mean this in a derogatory way. Coates's work has long depended on his ability to convince tough, unlikely, apparently scavenged materials to coexist with muscular and rough or atmospheric, even lyrical, painting languages. The offspring of this shotgun marriage are intensely urban, gritty, but refined abstractions that exploit dissonance the way jazz exploits dissonance—to create excitement and tension—and then resolve themselves in the nick of time into harmony.

The "canvases" in "Between the Lines" were really lengths of flattened, garden hose-sized industrial tubing wound over stretchers to create an uneven, but regularly inflected surface interrupted occasionally by joins, knots, ropes, and the like. Some seemed to have been wound and then painted on, while others suggested that painting preceded winding, so that their disjunctive internal pictorial incidents were the result of unplanned meetings of color events—a kind of Cubism by chance. Some were near monochromes, *à la* Yves Klein, and some riffs on Ab-Ex and Color Field abstraction, with their all-overness subverted by the implication that the whole thing could unwind at any moment. Coates's method, so critical to the effect of works of this type, could easily read as a recipe, yet despite the uniformity of his process, variety seemed to dominate his recent show—

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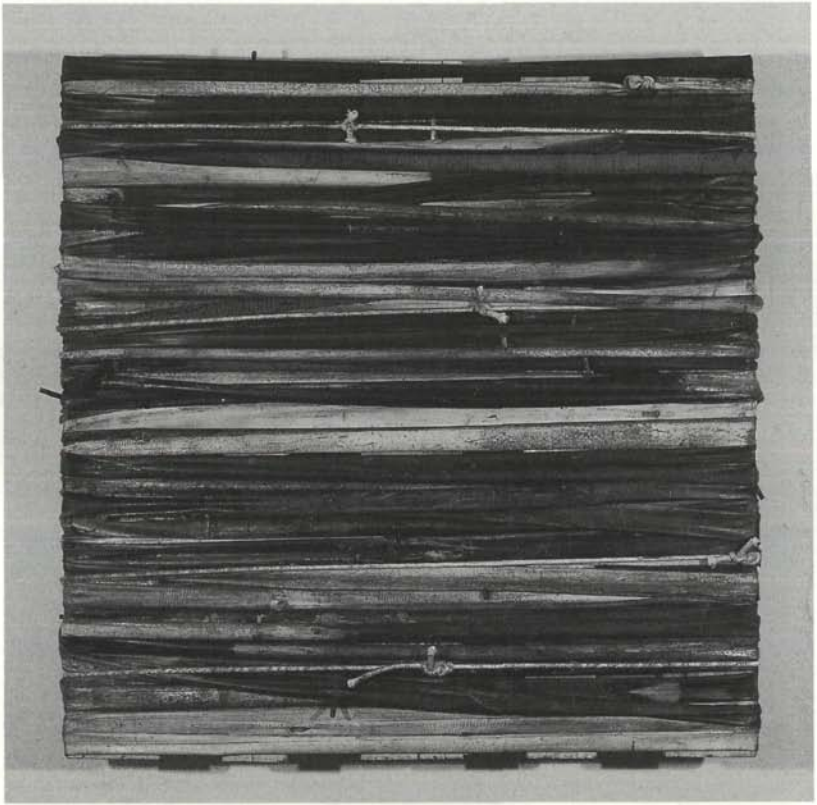

Dallas (1999) by Gregory Coates. Oil, innertubes, twin on wood palette. 41 by 41 by 5 inches. Courtesy of Cynthia Broan Gallery.

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variety of color, proportion, gesture, and surface density. If anything, the restrictions of facture made these differences more visible. Still, I'm eager to see what else Coates is up to.

Sandi Slone's exhibition of recent work at Cristinerose, entitled "Eternitas Interruptus," claimed to be about "time, memory, and an imagined archaeological dig of the future." Whether or not you knew this, Slone's paintings were at once brash, mysterious, and utterly assured. Like Lipsky, Slone has been working for nearly three decades, testing the expressive possibilities of overscaled gestures and (often peculiar) accumulations of texture and color. She first attracted attention with a series of bold "broom" pictures, dramatic swoops of layered color so energetic that, at their best, they seemed like waves about to engulf the viewer. Since then, Slone has explored a vast range of drawing and painting marks, and a vast range of more or less explicit images. Her new paintings return unequivocally to an allusive abstraction and to the scaled-up broom mark. Broad sweeps of glowing color collide, like tectonic plates; crusts and streaks of other hues are squeezed up by the impact—or is it the pressure of underlying layers that forces the upper slabs of color apart? At once vivid metaphors for burial and eruption, for the way memory works, and for the passage of time—even of geologic time—these pictures are also strongly evocative of the body and its hidden places. They are among Slone's strongest works to date. (I wish I had a firmer grasp of what the artist meant by her installation in the gallery's project room; I found it largely unintelligible, except for some cones of dry pigment, which seemed relevant to the canvases. Happily, the canvases took precedence.)

Like Slone, the Glasgow-born, peripatetic Lex Braes roots his sensually painted abstractions in specific references. In the past few years, for example, he has flirted with fragmented images of reclining and seated figures. Braes's current pictures, according to a witty text sheet available at his recent show at Rosenberg and Kaufman Fine Art, had their genesis in his experience of landscape in several parts of the world, and his sense of Scottish nationalism. This translates into richly layered expanses constructed with broad, transparent strokes of ochres and umbers; economical clusters of thick, dull red lines suggest fleeting configurations and/or push the space of the surface around. Sometimes the strokes accumulate as opaque, sooty "continents" or open out into diaphanous golden haze; at other times, the surface of the canvas seems as earthy and dense as a cliff face, so that Braes's slow, deliberate drawing begins to read as the artifact of some vanished culture, like an

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abstract kind of cave painting. (That neolithic red pigment reinforces the association.)

Braes's brief comments made interesting reading—he's a smart, articulate guy—but I'm not sure that they added much to the pictures themselves. In one of Braes's strongest pictures, a pair of unnameable red-bounded shapes drift across a brushy field, one sliding out of the confines of the canvas. In a long horizontal notable for its happy adjustment of shape and drawing, a narrow loop of thick line stretches across the center. Does knowing that these images had their origins, respectively, in the shape of the kilt (and all its political implications) or in observed landscape forms change your perceptions? Not really. If anything, it restricts your possibilities for association. The text gives you an additional glimpse of the way Braes's mind works, but his recent paintings—probably his toughest to date—are just as rewarding and perhaps more suggestive without explanations.

Not that I have anything against narrative content. Many of the most moving works in the Museum for African Art's *Liberated Voices: Contemporary Art from South Africa*, a fascinating survey of paintings, sculptures, installations, photos, and videos, all made since 1994 by thirteen black and white artists, were deeply informed by particular events and issues in the recent history of this troubled country (which is not to say that they were all equally explicit). Many were images of resistance—some of the most distinguished senior artists in the show were active participants in the movement, who used their art as an indictment against injustice. Paul Stopworth's and David Nbuthu Koloane's works, for example, inspired by the horrifying history of Steve Biko, were among the most powerful in the show. Koloane's *The Journey*, a haunting series of twenty insistently scrawled, fiercely layered acrylic and pastel drawings about Biko, was one of the first things to confront the visitor, demanding your complete attention with its urgency, its mysterious color, and its iconic, expressively simplified images. *The Journey* not only set the tone for *Liberated Voices*, but was also one of its most memorable inclusions. (Koloane's essay, "Postapartheid Expression and a New Voice," in the show's informative catalogue, is equally memorable.)

The level of passionate intensity established by *The Journey* was constant throughout the show, despite differences in themes, interpretations, media, and approach. It was visible in works as diverse as Sue Williamson's angry mixed-media prints, Willie Bester's composite "collages," and Zwelethu Mthethwa's elegant photographs, all meditations on the inequities and iniquities of Apartheid, both those of the past and

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those that persist. Other artists, no less passionate, such as Thabiso Phokompe, Brett Murray, and Claudette Schreuders, probed conceptions of Africanness in a formerly divided and still uneasy society. Works ranged from the figurative to the abstract, with resonances of everything from tribal art to mass media imagery; the artists' choice of materials similarly ranged from the humble and the discarded to the most recherché technology. Some works, not surprisingly, were less engaging than others, since even the best of motivations does not, after all, guarantee the best of results. But as a whole, *Liberated Voices* was a thought-provoking, stimulating show, and not to be missed.

Another "don't miss" of the season (besides the obvious ones of the Ingres portrait show at the Met and the Modern's illuminating shuffling of its collections as *Modernstarts*) was *Milton Avery: Edge of Abstraction*, a ravishing group of this superb painter's late landscape paintings and related works on paper at Knoedler. The selection included both familiar and unfamiliar works—among the former, such now-iconic sandbar and sea pictures as *Pink Dune*, with its eloquent sinuous shapes and astonishingly orchestrated, luminous expanses of rose, geranium pink, and green. Good as these well-known paintings are, it was even more exciting to see less familiar works, such as *Sunlight Reflections*, an all-over expanse of shimmering, detached, oversized strokes momentarily held together by some sort of gravitational pull; or *Onrushing Wave*, an exuberant, confrontational, curly-edged mass of pulsing white-on-white looming against a sea of transparent blue-black swipes. Pictures like these were reminders of the subtlety of Avery's much-celebrated gifts as a colorist, since they depended not on the brilliant chromatic chords of, say, *Pink Dune*, but on slowly perceived nuances and "half-tones" (nuances that, incidentally, are impossible to photograph).

Like Matisse, Avery was never an abstract painter. Instead, like Matisse, he translated his acute perceptions of actuality into a wholly invented, non-literal pictorial language of two-dimensional shapes and color harmonies. Yet the paintings at Knoedler suggested that in the 1950s and '60s, Avery entered into a dialogue with his younger abstract painter colleagues—including Rothko, whose early work had been profoundly influenced by Avery's—producing pictures that seem to test how far landscape elements could be stripped down and reinvented before they turned into pure metaphor. *Edge of Abstraction* was testimony to what should be self-evident: that Avery was one of America's most original, intelligent, and accomplished postwar modernists. It was a welcome corrective to what was perhaps the season's most glaring and nonsensical error—the Whitney's omission of Avery from Part Two of

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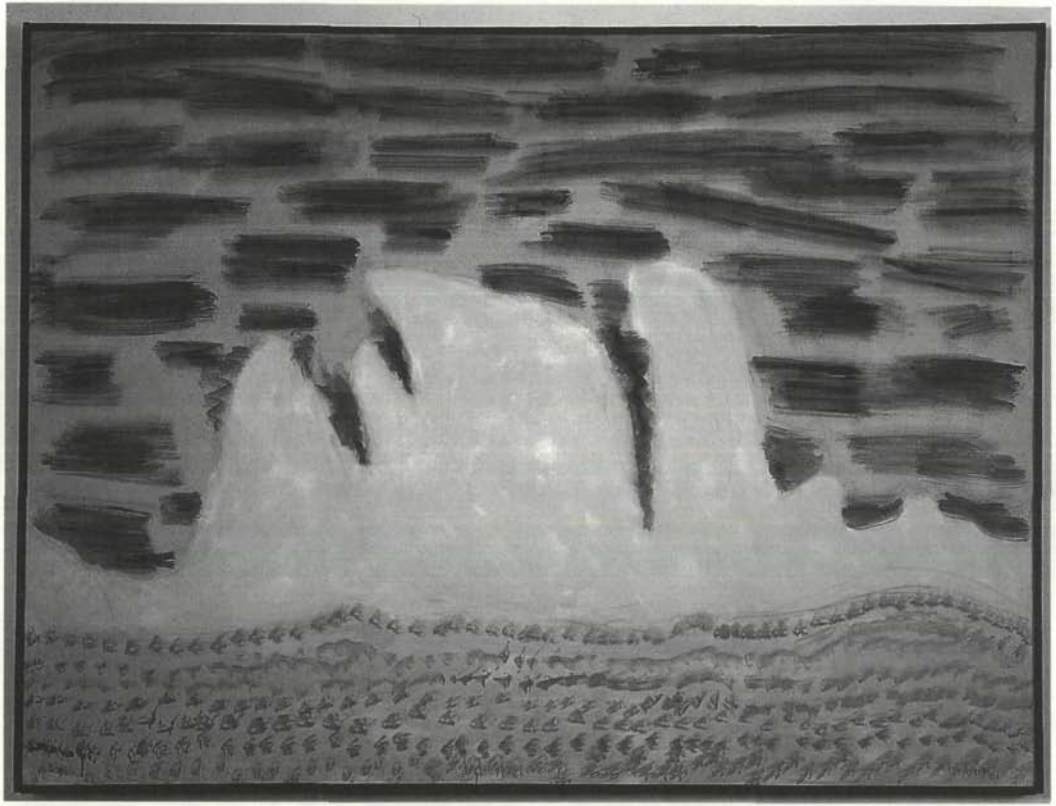

Onrushing Wave (1958) by Milton Avery. Oil on canvas. 54 by 72 inches. Courtesy of Knoedler & Company.

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its millennium super-show, *The American Century*, covering 1950 to the present. Many other important artists were omitted from the exhibition, but Avery is even missing from the catalogue index.

The excellence of Avery's work speaks for itself. All that needs to be said about Part Two is that it is just as skewed and inaccurate as Part One, but in slightly different ways. Once again, Abstract Expressionism was slighted and most of the artists associated with Clement Greenberg ignored or "marginalized." Space wasn't the issue; there was room for a section devoted to pattern painting. Even more than Part One, however, Part Two managed to reduce virtually everything in it, good, bad, or mediocre, to the status of illustration of cultural theory. It was depressingly clear that for the curators of Part Two, there was no difference between the splendid David Smith sculptures at the beginning of the show and the clip from *The Simpsons*, endlessly repeated on a video monitor, at its end.

But there were unexpected pleasures last season to offset the predictable irritants of the Whitney—for one, Cornelia Foss's show of modest, wind-swept seaside landscapes at DFN Gallery. Foss has an acute eye for the brilliant light of the water's edge, and in her best, usually most simply structured pictures, broad expanses of saturated blues, tans, and greens evoke sea, sand, and grasses with great economy and effect. You can almost smell the salt air. The star of the show, however, was a full-length portrait of a man in a blue shirt, accompanied by an energetic terrier, outdoors, bathed in seaside light. Maybe Foss should spend next summer painting figures?

John Clement's agreeable steel construction at Tricia Collins was another surprise. A pair of not-quite-symmetrical flaring arcs of tubing, joined by an open cat's cradle of rectangular sections, zigzagged across the gallery, all but filling the space and making viewers pick their way around and over the sculpture. I liked Clement's sensitivity to the visual weight and proportions of his elements, the generosity of scale, and the ambition of the piece. I hope there will be an opportunity to see more of what he's doing.

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Tears, History, Gall, and the Trouble with Identity

TEARS AND SAINTS. **By E. M. Cioran.** Translated from the Romanian and with an introduction by Ilinca Zarifopol-Johnston. The University of Chicago Press. $12.00.

HISTORY AND UTOPIA. **By E. M. Cioran.** Translated from the French by Richard Howard. The University of Chicago Press. $11.00.

ALL GALL IS DIVIDED: GNOMES AND APOPHTHEGMS. **By E. M. Cioran.** Translated from the French and with an introduction by Richard Howard. Arcade Publishing. $18.95.

WRITING ABOUT BORGES in the mid-1970s, Cioran noted wryly in a text included in *Anathemas and Admirations*: "The misfortune of being recognized has befallen him. He deserved better." By then he must have been aware that the same misfortune was in store for himself, for his reputation as an author of refined iconoclastic aphorisms written in perfect eighteenth-century-sounding French had already broken out of the narrow circles of the Parisian intellectual elite. Against all odds, the books of this marginal émigré—this *métèque* coming from an obscure East European country—had started to be reviewed in the major French newspapers, and Cioran was being discussed as a new, improbable post-Nietzschean La Rochefoucauld or Chamfort. He was on the point of becoming (appallingly, from his own perspective) a cult figure.

One of the misfortunes of recognition, in Cioran's particular case, was demonstrated at his death in 1995, when the baleful political allegiances of his youth in Romania, from which he had separated himself long since, were unearthed and became the focus of a controversy in the French press, a replay in miniature of *l'affaire Heidegger* of the previous decade. Unlike Heidegger's engagement with the Nazis, however, Cioran's fleeting intoxication or *emballement* (as he refers to it in his posthumous *Notebooks*) with the nationalist, mystical-terrorist Iron Guard movement of the Romanian 1930s could be understood as one unfortunate episode in a life devoted to "thinking against oneself," perhaps a failed attempt at intellectual suicide, clearly a manifestation of self-hatred—of that enigmatic self-hatred that he managed, later on, to distill into his elegant, darkly scintillating French. It was therefore neither out of conviction nor in order to promote himself, but out of self-hatred

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that Cioran embraced for a time a cause in which he did not and could not believe—a cause that he actually despised and that, once abandoned, continued, as a haunting memory, to fuel his anger with himself, as his personal *Notebooks* from 1957-1972 abundantly illustrate.

As for certain anti-Semitic statements that he made in his 1937 book, *Romania's Transfiguration* (for a discriminating analysis of which see Leon Volovici's *Nationalist Ideology and Anti-Semitism: The Case of the Romanian Intellectuals in the 1930s*), Cioran reflected twenty years later on the Jews ("A People of Solitaries") in *The Temptation to Exist*:

> When one is ready to capitulate, what a lesson, what a corrective in their endurance! . . .And yet, have I always done them justice? Far from it. If at twenty I loved them to the point of regretting not being one of them, later on, unable to forgive them for having played an outstanding role in the course of history, I found myself loathing them with the fury of love turned to hate. The vividness of their omnipresence made me all the more sensitive to the obscurity of my country, doomed, I knew, to be smothered and even to disappear. . . .Furthermore, at the time, I had only a bookish commiseration for their past sufferings, and could not divine those that were in store for them.

A certain quality of poignancy evident in "A People of Solitaries" calls attention to a more general but subtle characteristic of Cioran's writing: indeed, if one listens carefully, one can hear in the background, behind the ebbs and flows of his rhetoric, with its loud anathemas or low-voiced sarcasms, with its announcements of doom punctured by witticisms, with its resonant silences, a distant sorrowful strain, repeated again and again, a faint ritualized lamentation of infinite regret. This barely audible murmur of far-away weeping is at once deeply personal and anonymous; one naturally links it to the theme of tears in Cioran, more explicit in his early work, less apparent in the French books published during his lifetime, but prominent again in the posthumous *Notebooks*. (An English edition of this major work is being prepared by Richard Howard, the inspired translator of all of Cioran's French volumes.)

The first entry of the *Notebooks* contains the following startling sentence: "Desire to weep in the middle of the streets. I have the demon of tears." The date: June 1957. By that time Cioran had lived precariously in Paris for twenty years, first as a drifting doctoral student (he never seriously considered writing a dissertation or embarking on a teaching career) and, after the war, as a penniless refugee and hermit of sorts; he

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had published three books of somber and yet exhilarating aphorisms, *Précis de décomposition* (1949) (rendered as *A History of Decay* by Richard Howard), followed by *Syllogismes de l'amertume* (1953) (*All Gall Is Divided*) and *La tentation d'exister* (1956) (*The Temptation to Exist*). The self-portrait that was emerging was that of a thinker at war with everything, but primarily with himself: a "fanatic of disaster" whose only ideal was that of "thinking against oneself"; a born rebel, a man of gratuitous violence, a heretic who could find solace only in self-derision or self-abuse; a writer whose sole excuse for writing was "that I have hated myself in all the objects of my hatreds"; a "hallucinated clown" given to "morose frivolity," and a man whose only gift was a "vocation for failure," inherited from the minor, absurd nation from which he was descended. "How can one be a Romanian?" he was asking himself, echoing the famous interrogation in Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes* as well as Paul Valéry's lesser-known, but more philosophical rejoinder, "How can one be what one is?" Would one imagine such a character as being possessed by the "demon of tears"?

The more lyrically inclined young Cioran—or his mask, for that matter—did not hesitate to speak openly about the "gift of tears." By its very title, *Tears and Saints* points to the deeper religion of his anti-religious, and particularly anti-Christian, thought. From early on an unbelieving mystic, "a fanatic without convictions," a skeptic in anxious pursuit of nothingness, he was attracted to sainthood by its negative implications: contempt for the world, ascetic self-denial, solitude, self-torture. His "metaphysics of tears," of grief and loss, was the other face of his more spectacular expressions of anguish, apocalyptic rage, and despair. Coming after *On the Heights of Despair* (1934) and *The Book of Delusions* (1936), and published nearly simultaneously with his flamboyant and wrongheaded nationalist manifesto *Romania's Transfiguration*, *Tears and Saints*—an attempt at a "hermeneutics of tears," that "would show us the way that leads from ecstasy to anathema"—is certainly the most revealing volume of the young Cioran.

Weeping harks back to the loss of paradise, Cioran's most pervasive obsession: "In the depths of our consciousness, paradise moans and memories weep. In this lamentation, we descry the metaphysical meaning of tears and perceive life's unfolding as regret." Tears are also associated with music, to which Cioran dedicates his most poetic pages. Music is for him paradise briefly regained to be lost again, an ephemeral immortality, an ecstasy of nostalgia: "I know of no other music than that of tears," he writes. "Born out of the loss of paradise, music gives birth to the *symbols* of this loss: tears." (Tears and music are also linked

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in Cioran's early French book *All Gall Is Divided*: "Music, a system of farewells, evokes a physics whose point of departure is not atoms but tears.") Mozart, he confesses, "makes me regret the sin of Adam." And also: "Mozart is a melancholy Botticelli: 'Primavera' covered with a dew of tears." But in Cioran's universe, weeping is never far from cursing, prayer from blasphemy; since "everything in the world both confirms and denies [God's] divinity," he writes, "blasphemy and prayer are equally justified." *Tears and Saints* could be described, unlikely as this may seem, as a nihilistic rewriting of Ecclesiastes in the course of a free-wheeling, fragmentary, lyrical and polemical meditation on sainthood. "Wherefore the need to add to Ecclesiastes when everything is already in it? Even more than that, whatever is not in it, is false," the twenty-six-year-old theorist of despair proclaims. "All nihilists," Cioran states in another aphorism, "have wrestled with God. One more proof of his kinship with nothingness. After you have trampled everything underfoot, his is the last bastion of nothingness left." Writing about saints and saintly algolagnia (enviously, since "suffering is man's only biography; its *voluptuousness*, the saint's"), Cioran goes on to identify divinity with poison and to relate the conversion process to an organic infection: "Divine revelations break out after a long period of incubation; God, like pus, grows slowly to a head. We have a conversion if the divine boil bursts; if not, we live for the rest of our days with poison in our veins, i.e., with a God who refuses to show himself." A useful later clue to the implied perspective adopted in *Tears and Saints* (and not only there) is found in *Anathemas and Admirations*: "However much I have frequented the mystics, deep down I have always sided with the Devil; unable to equal him in power, I have tried to be worthy of him, at least, in insolence, acrimony, arbitrariness, and caprice."

That there is in Cioran's early work a good deal of show-off and tragic bluster is undeniable. Unimpressed by the young author's rhetoric of paradox and apocalypse, the distinguished Romanian writer and essayist M. Sebastian rightly spoke, in the 1930s, of Cioran's despair as "theatrical." What is remarkable, however, is that this theatricality, to which Cioran stuck throughout his life, constantly refining it and imposing on it the ambiguities of irony, had been from the beginning a mode of self-construction as well as self-confession. In other words, his chosen roles (in *Tears and Saints* as a failed saint and a saint of failure, as a prophet of futility and a metaphysician of tears) were not only appropriate to his personality as an actor, but also expressive of his deeper inner conflicts: hence, in his work, that ring of authenticity that accompanies great acting; hence also the split between the characters in

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the philosophical drama on the stage of his writing, possessed alternately by murderous rages and suicidal urges, and the everyday man, delicately thoughtful, modest and kind, full of compassionate concern for others. (The contrast between the writer and the man struck virtually all those who met Cioran personally, including myself.)

History and Utopia, published in 1960, groups Cioran's reflections on communism, Russia, central Europe and the Balkans, tyranny and tyrants, the role of rancor in history, the mechanism of utopia, and the myth of the Golden Age, all triggered by the Hungarian anti-communist revolution of 1956. Predictably, utopia being "the grotesque en rose," history can only be its reverse, that is, the grotesque in black, a nightmare come true (one is reminded of the "nightmare of history" theorized by the young Dedalus/Joyce, but illustrated more grimly and convincingly by the other great Irishman of the twentieth century, Samuel Beckett). Philosophically, Cioran may be said to transpose Nietzsche's views of *ressentiment* into a darker and more brutal register. In homage to the French tradition of moral reflection and its psychological subtleties, Nietzsche had preserved in his German the French word, transforming it into a major *terminus technicus*, a key to the understanding of his "genealogy of morals." Cioran, as it were, retranslates it as *rancune* (rancor) and associates it with such negatively loaded words in the moral vocabulary as envy, revenge, intolerance, fanaticism, lust for naked power, hatred, and, of course, self-hatred. History, then, becomes an "odyssey of rancor," and the drive toward utopia is nothing more than a will to enact a "monstrous phantasy" under the guise of perversely false promises. The broad outlines of the resulting philosophy of history are as somber—in a tradition that goes from gnosticism to Schopenhauer—as they are uninteresting and, sometimes, quite irritating. Their justification is strictly personal, in the sense that they are required by the inner logic of the persona or mask through which Cioran has chosen to speak. In other words, they can be seen as mere props for the staging of his lifelong quarrel with himself, which he enlarges to a quarrel with humanity and the world, along lines suggested in the following passage:

> In proportion as we penetrate our own secrets, we come to loathe our kind, precisely because they resemble us. When we have no further illusions about ourselves, we retain none about others: the unspeakable that we discover by introspection we extend, by a legitimate generalization, to other mortals; depraved in their essence, we rightly endow them with all the vices which, oddly

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> enough, most of us turn out to be unfit for or averse to ferreting out, to observe in ourselves or in others. . . .Those—rare, it is true—who have been indiscreet or unfortunate enough to plunge all the way to the bottom of their beings, they know how to judge man: they can no longer love him, for they can no longer love themselves.

Cioran's vision of history is an exercise in self-demonization, an attempt to personalize the clichés of satanic rebellion. The clichés *qua* clichés remain as banal as ever.

What is interesting, as always in Cioran, are the details of the spectacle he offers, the local flashes of insight, the tone and verbal power of the playwright-actor (sincere in the very insincerity of playacting), the magnificent style. Even though the dire prophecies contained in *History and Utopia* (according to which the Soviet Union would conquer or dominate a decadent, exhausted, disintegrating democratic West before succumbing itself to the effete charms of liberty and suffering the same fate) have failed, many formulations have preserved their mordant suggestiveness, their haunting memorability. The eerie image of the Balkans as a "brothel on fire" is one of many possible examples. The Balkan countries, Cioran advances, are in possession of "a biological capital it would be futile to seek in the West" and may still take revenge for having been "mistreated, disinherited, cast into an anonymous martyrdom, pinioned between sloth and sedition." He is aware that this "assertion will seem ludicrous" but goes on to show how the last "primitives" of Europe might give her a new, dangerous, perhaps destructive energy:

> But the Balkans?—I don't want to defend them, nor do I want to pass over their virtues in silence. That taste for devastation, for internal clutter, for a universe like a brothel on fire, that sardonic outlook on ancient or imminent cataclysms, that pungency, that *far niente* of the insomniac or the assassin—is it nothing, then, an inheritance so rich and so burdensome, one that will thus empower those who come into it?

Well said, and true within the "theatrical" frame of Cioran's discourse of self-canceling hyperboles and ironic ambiguities; but exportable to other, more common frames only under penalty of gross misunderstanding and inexcusable lack of taste.

All Gall Is Divided is both a distilled summary of Cioran's previous work and an ironic essay in thematic "self-indexation," in that it spells out,

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in the form of sub-chapter titles, the range of his subjects and intellectual attitudes, from language ("Atrophy of Utterance"), time ("Time and Anemia"), and the decay of the West ("Occident"), to "The Circus of Solitude," religion, music, history ("The Vertigo of History"), etc. The book, very short, could be described as an exercise in aphoristic minimalism; so much so that, with an exception of a few essays that run to five or six brief sentences, most of it consists of one- or two-sentence maxims, epigrams, and witticisms in the vein of the great French *moralistes* at their most laconic, but also of such more dazzling and sometimes deliberately frivolous masters of paradox as Oscar Wilde. Cioran, however, remains true to his persona but also, inasmuch as he has identified with this persona, to himself. In this volume, a tiny and delicately constructed chamber of echoes, we variously hear rumblings of past and future despairs, blasphemies and curses, and darker or lighter, at times riotously comical, musings. We encounter virtually all of Cioran's obsessive themes, among which, to exemplify his stylistics of extreme brevity: insomnia ("Insomnia is the only form of heroism compatible with the bed"), despair as a means of survival ("The secret of my adaptations to life?—I've changed despairs the way I've changed shirts"), the always-too-late blessings of skepticism ("Skepticism spreads its blessings upon us too late, upon our faces deteriorated by our convictions, upon our faces of hyenas with an ideal"), disgust ("Our disgusts?—Detours of the disgust with ourselves"), and so on. One needs to be aware that when he contrasts joy to gall, he is not necessarily rejecting joy and espousing gall, but simply observing that joy, a spontaneous vital reaction, is in and of itself less reasoned, less logically rigorous in its expression than paranoid gall. Isn't it true that, as Cioran puts it, "What spoils joy is its lack of rigor; on the other hand, just consider the logic of gall"? Be that as it may, Cioran's logical quarrels with the absurdities of life do not exclude a strong, if half-hidden, love for life. To make the latter fit the rhetorical profile of his persona/personality, Cioran prefers to speak of "my morbid love for life." Like most of his earlier or later books, *All Gall is Divided* reveals, on close reading, the chink in the shield of the author's apparent pessimism: a secret (and on occasion open) bias in favor of a certain lack of rigor and a wariness against the logic of all divided, and dividing, gall.

Matei Calinescu

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The Strange Normalcy of Post-Communism

LETTERS FROM FREEDOM: POST-COLD WAR REALITIES AND PERSPECTIVES. **By Adam Michnik.** Edited by Irena Grudzińska-Gross. University of California Press. $48.00.

WHOEVER THOUGHT that communism's aftermath would be an unmitigated democratic success was wrong. True, the new democracies in the core countries of Central Europe have managed to establish genuine liberal institutions. Constitutionalism has taken deep roots in these states, and acceptance into NATO further emphasized their sweeping integration into the Western "club." The plus-side balance sheets of the first post-communist decade, however, are less prevalent in southeastern Europe (the area frequently and somewhat condescendingly designated as the Balkans). The Yugoslav wars have demonstrated the readiness of the former communists to embark upon the most catastrophic of militaristic adventures in order to maintain power. The utopia of the ethnically pure community, which is the ideological underpinning of Slobodan Milosević's regime, is nothing but a transmogrification of the old Leninist dream of the totally unified and mobilized society. Class struggle has been forgotten and its substitute is the nationalist pathos imbued with resentful fantasies of destruction, martyrdom, and unparalleled victimhood. But these post-communist mythologies are not just part of a Balkan syndrome. The whole post-Leninist universe is plagued with unprocessed memories, unfulfilled desires, and failed expectations. Years ago, Adam Michnik suggested that nationalism is the last stage of communism. Even if this hypothesis does not apply to Poland, it is disturbingly appropriate when it comes to understanding what has happened to the Yugoslav dream of "brotherhood and unity." In the former USSR and much of southeastern Europe, Michnik's predictions regarding the painful, often maddeningly frustrating exit from communism turned out to be prescient.

Adam Michnik's contribution to the theory and practice of East European dissidence was overwhelming. His *Letters from Prison* were celebrated as crucial documents for the articulation of the anti-totalitarian oppositional strategy that eventually did result in the breakdown of communism in Poland and in the region once known as "the Soviet bloc." His new volume, benefiting from Ken Jowitt's provocative preface, is a collection of brilliant essays, interviews, and historical-political

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analyses meant to explain and highlight the entangled transition from Bolshevik-style monolithic authoritarianism to an open and diverse society. Compared to the previous volume, as well as to his other writings dealing with the relationship between the Catholic Church and the secular Left in Poland, this book is more fragmented, reflecting in a way the extreme diversity of the post-communist *problématique*. As a whole, however, the book confirms Michnik's intellectual formula: he is, to use Isaiah Berlin's classic metaphor, a hedgehog, a thinker who knows one big thing. In his case, this thing is that communism was one of the two main evils of the twentieth century (the other one being fascism), and that the struggle to overthrow it and eliminate its legacies is a most noble human endeavor. From this main premise, Michnik derives his political and intellectual agenda regarding the role of democratic intellectuals in the struggle to establish a liberal order based on truth, civility, and tolerance.

What makes this new volume particularly fascinating is Michnik's readiness to challenge any form of cultural taboo as he explores the tribulations of the transitions and the often difficult choices faced by former heroes in new political environments. This is a book written by a passionate participant in the cultural polemics of the first post-communist decade, a man who has had the courage to confront many of his former friends in the name of values he strongly believes in, even if this sometimes means isolation and vilification. Michnik, a man who did his utmost to subvert totalitarian domination, is now the main exponent of the search for democratic invention. As Jeffrey Goldfarb suggests in his important recent book *Civility and Subversion: The Intellectual in Democratic Society*, Michnik's lifelong effort has been "to make a coherent politics possible among those who differ: before the fall of communism, a democratic opposition; after the fall of communism, a non-authoritarian alternative to the totalitarian left and to the newly emerging authoritarian right." Whatever one thinks about the relevance of Michnik's fears, one thing is certain: he has never given up his independent thinking. Joining any majority only because it is popular is not Michnik's style. On the contrary, he has made it a point of honor to oppose any type of witch-hunt and to promote a politics of morality, whatever personal price this may entail. When one compares Michnik's views to the more rancorous ones of his critics, one is tempted to paraphrase a famous saying that it is more honorable to be wrong in Michnik's company than right in that of his foes. In several essays, Michnik returns to his early reflections on the destiny of revolutionary values after the victory of anti-communist forces, the impact of nationalism

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and of various fundamentalisms on democratic transitions, and the moral dilemmas generated by the return of the more or less repentant former communists to government. Compared to other writings coming from former dissidents, Michnik's positions come closest to those of his dear friend and former Solidarity advisor Jacek Kuron, those of Hungarian political philosopher János Kis, and to Václav Havel's relentless attempt to reconcile morality and politics.

As a whole (and Michnik is more interested in generalizations than in detailed analyses of concrete situations), the post-communist world appears to be an immense experiment in reconstructing identities, loyalties, sentiments, and convictions. Nothing should be taken for granted in such a volatile cosmos; no prediction is fully safe. A struggle is going on, Michnik insists, between those who support pluralist (liberal) values and those who resent them. Without in any way idealizing the post-communist condition, Michnik rejects moral absolutism and the claims of any entity (state, nation, or church) to substitute itself for the individual's sovereignty. Liberty is self-constituted for Michnik and needs no further justification. His liberalism is rooted in the memory of the long decades of oppressive destruction of civic bonds and societal trust. The eternal heretic, challenging many of his former comrades (the passages about Lech Walesa are particularly telltale), Michnik continues to place his wager on honor, openness, and dignity against any form of collectivistic regimentation. Irena Grudzińska-Gross did a wonderful job of selecting and editing this volume (though I confess that as a Michnik aficionado I regret the absence of the masterful essay "An Embarrassing Anniversary," published in the *New York Review of Books* on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Prague Spring).

In contrast with radicals of both camps (the former oppositionists on the one hand, the former communists and their supporters on the other), Michnik maintains here the unorthodox and not always very popular thesis that velvet restorations are the inevitable consequence of the former dissidents' refusals to unleash post-revolutionary terror. A wise student of both revolutionary and counter-revolutionary thought, Michnik sees his role in post-communist Poland as that of a defender of those values that permitted the peaceful breakthrough of 1989. Realistic compromise versus idealistic catharsis is the line he sticks to, even if this approach makes him the target of slanderous attacks from neo-fundamentalist quarters. Michnik's rationale is that one cannot engage in roundtable negotiations with the communists only to abandon the logic of mutual restraint at the moment "our side" triumphs. Austrian political scientist Anton Pelinka's book *Politics of the Lesser Evil: Leadership,*

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Democracy and Jaruzelski's Poland provides persuasive support for this perspective. The politics of intractable ultimate ends, oblivious of the need to admit concessions and retreats, can only lead to new authoritarian experiments. Whatever one thinks of General Wojciech Jaruzelski's real reasons for proclaiming martial law in December 1981—and this is an issue to be discussed forever—one thing remains clear: without Jaruzelski's decision to give up power in 1989-90, the anti-communist revolution in Poland could have been at least as violent as the Romanian one. In other words, communist leaders differ from one another: some saw the need to change the structure of power (Gorbachev, Jaruzelski); others did not (Honecker, Ceausescu). The Polish miracle of 1989 would have been impossible if those at the top had decided to use force against their opponents. Both as political history and as an analysis of legitimacy crises within a decaying Leninist regime, Pelinka's book is very useful. It is a good complement to Michnik's essays and long interview with Jaruzelski, even if the two authors may have strong disagreements on the nature of Jaruzelski's will to accept defeat.

For Michnik, the democratic game (arguably at this moment "the only one in town") is sufficiently permissive for the post-communists to return to government (but not to power in the pre-1989 sense) using parliamentary means. No matter how they deal with the past, in terms of political aspirations these people have no strategic design for full-fledged restoration of the *ancien régime*. The old system, based on structural violence and symbolic manipulation, is unmistakably defunct, state both Michnik and Havel in a remarkable dialogue included in the volume. The key point for Michnik is that this political comeback does not occur in the form of Leninist insurrections (coups), but procedurally. To those who long for charismatic politics, Michnik opposes a philosophy of deliberate de-radicalization of the public sphere. Democratic normalcy, so disappointing to those nostalgic for heroic resistance, is certainly preferable to a climate of vindictive hysteria whose effect is social fragmentation and polarization, a state of war of all against all in which reconciliation is seen by extremists of various shades as capitulation or treason. *La guerre est finie* is the leitmotif of Michnik's melancholy reflections. One can of course dispute his vision, but it would be hard to question its authenticity and consistency.

The heroic ethos of the anti-totalitarian resistance, the politics of deliberate subversion of the status quo, has been replaced by a politics of small steps. Grandiose gestures irritate and exasperate Michnik, who, from the days of his imprisonment under communism, pledged never to participate

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in the building of new jails. The fact that the former communists abide by democratic procedures is more important for him than secret police files. This does not mean, however, unconditional cooperation with the former communists. Reconciliation—or, better said, amnesty—does not signify amnesia, repeats the editor of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Poland's most circulated daily. Quoting Zbigniew Herbert, he reminds his readers that nobody has the right to forgive in the name of those who were murdered at dawn. Preserving, even cultivating memory is thus a sine qua non of this strange post-communist charm. Ex-communist politicians in Hungary or Poland have long since lost the ideological ardor that had inspired their forebears in the frantic effort to build the utopia of the perfect society ("the only perfect society is the concentration camp," writes Michnik). These politicians loathe Marxism or any other ideological construct. Far from favoring the restoration of command economies, these people have turned into the beneficiaries of free markets. Such ironies of the post-communist landscape are morally reprehensible but nevertheless sociologically irresistible.

Michnik advocates a patient and tolerant approach to the political and moral tensions of post-communism. Instead of Manichean or vindictive calls for retroactive justice, he proposes a philosophy grounded in individualism, liberty, civic awareness, and constitutional patriotism. For him, "gray is beautiful," which simply means that the times of "hot" ideologies are over and it is now urgent to cultivate ideas, not closed doctrinaire systems. Any form of fanaticism, especially those related to ethnic, religious, or political fundamentalism, provokes his angry reaction. In the space of critical European thinking of the twentieth century, Michnik represents an unequivocally anti-Jacobin stance. For him, truth is more important than success, an attitude he shares with such figures as Léon Blum, Albert Camus, and Raymond Aron (see in this respect Tony Judt's excellent book *The Burden of Responsibility*). Michnik is a Pascalian thinker who values doubt and does not gloss over human passions. Unpredictable and deliberately controversial, Michnik remains one of the freest and most vivid voices of contemporary democratic thought.

Vladimir Tismaneanu

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The Empiricist Dream

PHILOSOPHY IN THE FLESH: THE EMBODIED MIND AND ITS CHALLENGE TO WESTERN THOUGHT. By George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. Basic Books. $30.00.

PHILOSOPHY IN THE FLESH is an account of recent work in cognitive science, a multidisciplinary project compounded of linguistics, psychology, statistical inquiries, computer modeling, and speculation about the nature of the mind. Lakoff and Johnson, whose own areas of expertise are linguistics (metaphor theory) and the history of philosophy, call their metaphysics *Embodied Realism* and their theory of truth *Embodied Truth* or *Embodied Correspondence Theory*, and their general strategy is to answer questions in logic, metaphysics, and ethics by interposing descriptions of the body and its brain between assumptions about the physical world on the one hand and concepts, language, and theories on the other. The book reprises most of an earlier work, *Metaphors We Live By* (1979), but includes extra material on the cognitive unconscious, on computer modeling, and on theories of truth, as well as long discussions about the metaphors of ancient and modern philosophy.

Lakoff and Johnson argue, in effect, that although metaphorical meaning has a more complicated origin than literal meaning, both kinds are ultimately traceable to interactions between the body and its environment.

Literal concepts are either basic or spatial. Basic concepts are of physical objects and substances (cat, mat, gold), physical actions (swim, grasp), emotions (love, anger), and social constructs (club, family). The language of the basic level gives a reasonably accurate representation of the real world because it arises from physical interaction with the environment. Spatial concepts are "at the heart of our conceptual system" but do not refer to anything in the real world. The reason given is that spatial relationships cannot be seen, a poor reason in my view. Terrestrial spatial relations are not visible, perhaps, but they are acquired from direct bodily experience, i.e., through locomotion and touch.

Abstract concepts, by contrast, are metaphorical. Abstract reasoning is not governed by direct contact with the environment but indirectly, via conceptual metaphors in the head. The existence of conceptual metaphors is inferred from the fact that verbal expressions fall into groups marked by common features; thus, the existence of the conceptual metaphor "high is good, low is bad" is deducible from the prevalence of

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descriptions like *low status, high status, he's feeling low, he's on a high*, and many others. "Conceptual metaphor," however, is not just a general label for this or that group of expressions. These special super-metaphors have a neurological basis and belong to all the races of humanity.

Metaphors arise when different kinds of experience are conflated. For example, an infant will conflate its experience of the mother's warm body with its own emotional reactions of love and happiness; hence we say love is warm and its absence cold. Conflation occurs when impulses in the sensory-motor sector of the brain jump or spread into the sectors that deal with emotion and conscious thought. These processes in the brain cannot be directly observed, of course, but they can be represented in computer models. Lakoff and Johnson believe computer models which show that neural impulses *could* occur in certain ways constitute a proof ("an existence proof") that they actually *do* occur in those ways. Others might prefer to call computer models of unobservable events "pictures of possibilities," contrasting them with "pictures of actualities" such as models of manned spaceships orbiting the Earth.

Much of the book is given over to tedious explanations of the metaphors of philosophy and ordinary speech. Metaphor theory, when separated from its interdisciplinary companions, has only one thing to say ("Here's *another* non-literal meaning!"). In this it somewhat resembles the medieval "science of similarity" described by Michel Foucault in *The Order of Things* as "plethoric, yet poverty-stricken. . .a thing of sand," in which "the elements of knowledge are linked only by addition and all knowledge is knowledge of the same thing; hence the monotony."

Critics said of *Metaphors We Live By* that its authors discovered nothing new but merely redefined the word *metaphor*. I'd like to propose a criticism, or solution, of a different kind. In my opinion Lakoff and Johnson accidentally produced a *reductio ad absurdum* argument which destroys the literal/metaphorical dichotomy. They inadvertently proved that the dichotomy is neither exhaustive nor even reasonably clear. By insisting on a counter-intuitive generalization they showed us (without meaning to) that the ideas of the literal and the metaphorical are radically confused and almost useless. Language isn't literal and isn't metaphorical either.

On the subject of the unconscious mind, Lakoff and Johnson say cognitive science has discovered that 95 percent of thinking is unconscious. Whenever one has a thought or understands an utterance one must first engage, unconsciously and extremely rapidly, in a huge number of "incredibly complex" processes: accessing memory, interpreting sounds as language, dividing sounds into phonemes and morphemes, assigning

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meanings to words, constructing and inspecting mental images, performing inferences, and many others. The authors do not tell us how this discovery was made, or when, or where. We are not told whether it occurred in linguistics or psychology or computer science or neurology. There are no clues in the text and no reference is made here to any of the items in the bibliography. The absence of evidence on such an important point (and in a very long book) is surprising and leads one to suspect that the so-called discovery was really an *a priori* assumption. The suspicion is strengthened when one reaches the point in the text at which it is said that the cognitive unconscious is only an hypothesis: it is merely posited. Positing, of course, is always an *a priori* procedure.

Lakoff and Johnson believe that Western philosophy is committed to a traditional correspondence theory of truth, i.e., to the idea that words fit the world rather in the way that maps fit landscapes. They reject this thesis because according to them it creates a chasm between language and the world which can't be bridged by the notion of correspondence. That notion, they say, "has very little content."

Their own account, the "embodied correspondence theory of truth," has two elements. One element proposes a relativized version of the word-world fit; the other proposes the idea that there are different "levels" of truth. The relativized version of the word-world fit runs as follows: "A person takes a sentence as 'true' of a situation if what he or she understands the sentence as expressing accords with what he or she understands the situation to be." This proposition is open to a *tu quoque* response because it retains the original word-world gap. *Understanding that a sentence accords with a situation is the very same thing as understanding that certain words correspond with reality.* Such understanding therefore contains the original correspondence theory. The old theory, together with its supposed flaw, is embedded in the new one.

Lakoff and Johnson think there is a gap between science and experience. Neural events cause conscious experiences, yet descriptions of neural events "contradict" ordinary descriptions of such experience. (It is not clear whether the authors realize that the gap between mutually contradictory propositions is not only unbridged but unbridgeable.) The gap can be closed, they claim, by adopting the idea that phenomenological truth and scientific truth are on different "levels." Is there, though, a real contradiction here? Surely not. It isn't easy to see how the gap between unconscious brain events, and conscious thoughts and perceptions, might be closed; but future possible explanations should not be ruled out as inconceivable. Moreover, the "levels of truth" maneuver is surely naive. There is no independent evidence for different "levels"; the idea was

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introduced ad hoc merely in order to remove a difficulty. Worse still, the maneuver doesn't work. Even if it had the negative result of neutralizing a contradiction, it wouldn't thereby provide a positive explanation to bridge the gap between neural events and conscious experiences. If gaps are flaws, then the theory of "embodied truth" is no better than the traditional correspondence theory.

"Embodied truth" is a soft version of relativism and as such it can have no role in philosophical discourse. Relativized accounts of truth, however soft, can't be used to justify the premises of arguments. Lakoff and Johnson's "understanding of the situation" with regard to "embodied truth" differs from mine, but they can't show that they are right and I am wrong; it is self-evident, in this case, that any appeal to "embodied truth" would be viciously circular.

The authors attack *a priori* reasoning as such and say that it can and should be replaced with "empirically responsible inquiry." This raises many important questions about their own procedures. Here are three: why do Lakoff and Johnson condemn philosophy because it reasons *a priori*, yet accept mathematics, which also reasons *a priori*? Why should we accept their own self-undermining *a priori* assumption that *a priori* assumptions have no place in genuine intellectual inquiry? And why should we accept their other *a priori* assumptions—for example, the three "commitments" of the methodology Lakoff and Johnson recommend, or the *ad hoc* introduction of "levels of truth" mentioned above?

Much of this book is boisterously aggressive. The authors speak of challenging and eventually replacing traditional Western thought with "philosophy as it has never been seen before"—a subject which, perhaps unsurprisingly, turns out to be indistinguishable from metaphor theory.

Jenny Teichman

Montale in Translation

Collected Poems 1920-1954. By Eugenio Montale. Translated and annotated by Jonathan Galassi. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. $40.00.

The supreme pleasure of reading a poet in translation is to find oneself in the hands of a translator who is the equal of his original. Dryden's Lucretius and his Ovid, along with Pope's Homer, belong to that category,

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so that Johnson could say of the latter's *Iliad* that it was "a performance which no age or nation can pretend to equal," and add, of its effect on subsequent English poetry, "His version may be said to have tuned the English tongue; for since its appearance no writer, however deficient in other powers, has wanted melody." Few translators could earn or deserve such an accolade. Indeed, I have long been conscious of a debt to rather substandard versions of foreign poets from languages I either didn't know or only imperfectly understood. I first gained access to the sensibility of Montale, with its extraordinary inwardness balanced against the impingement of a threatening outer world, through a text frequently not only incompetent but grotesque. The poem was "Arsenio." While a student at Cambridge, I had turned up Mario Praz's version of this in an old copy of T. S. Eliot's *Criterion*. It has stuck in my mind ever since, though it is a horrible example of what may happen when a considerable scholar tries to compose verse in a language which is not his own. Praz wanders in and out of an attempted modern idiom into archaism and poeticality: *ye, o'er, 'gainst, midst, quenchéd*. The accent on the last syllable there betrays an uncertainty about what you do with those *-ed* endings: *hooded* bears an acute accent too, along with *drenched*, while *hurled* gets away scot-free. I was, however, fascinated by this literary curiosity because it conveyed in spite of itself a decided similarity to the state of mind depicted in Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," another case of a poet in disharmony with reality and conscious, in a very Montalean way, of the presence of the sea, threatening and seductive at the same time.

It was a relief, several years later, to read George Kay's *Penguin Book of Italian Verse* (1958) with its plain prose versions. Here was no false poetry to come between oneself and an excellent choice of leading poems by Montale. Things took a turn for the worse when Kay did a selected Montale in verse in 1964. His greatest difficulty was with rhyme, and in order to get rhymes he invented constructions which were lumberingly heavy, neither Italian nor English. It is curious that reasonable people with little poetic talent are capable of such odd things when they embark on versifying.

With Jonathan Galassi one is in another world. Almost twenty years ago he proved his sensitivity and expertise in translating Montale's prose with a selection of the poet's essays, *The Second Life of Art* (1983). His massive volume of the poetry is nothing short of heroic in scale and in the variousness of forms that he matches against Montale's own subtle hesitations between traditional prosody and free verse. Not since William Arrowsmith's *Cuttlefish Bones* (1993), versions of the

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poems written between 1920 and 1927, has there appeared such a commitment to Montale's poetry. But Galassi's task is far greater in that his *Collected Poems* takes us up to 1954 with the many changes of tone and approach that characterize the later, less "symbolist" Montale. Like Arrowsmith, Galassi accompanies the poems with notes that are always relevant to our reading of them. One of the texts he draws on deserves special mention here. This is *Una dolcezza inquieta, l'universo poetico di Eugenio Montale* (1996) by Giuseppe Marcenaro and Piero Boragina. The title of the book is a quotation from "The Lemon Trees," Montale's most famous early poem. This volume supplies us with both commentary and visual anthology. We see much unfamiliar Italian art of the twenties and thirties, together with many photographs of Montale's circle so that we can know, for example, what Irma Brandeis, the American Dantista, worshiped by Montale as a kind of *dolce stil novo* ideal, actually looked like. Galassi's own book contains, beside its wealth of annotation, the short essay "Reading Montale," the best I have come across on the scope of Montale's personal themes.

Montale admired the work of an earlier poet, a kind of Italian Laforgue, Guido Gozzano (1883-1916), who had already found an alternative to the opulent rhetoric of Gabriele D'Annunzio which had overwhelmed Italian poetry earlier this century. The problem of D'Annunzio still hung in the air for writers of the generation of Montale who himself believed that D'Annunzio had "experimented with and exploited all the linguistic and prosodic possibilities of our time." Montale felt that Gozzano had bypassed D'Annunzio's rhetoric just as "Baudelaire had traversed Hugo in order to lay the groundwork of a new poetry." For Montale, Gozzano introduced a quieter and more incisive tone into Italian, while, at the same time, "he stayed close to [D'Annunzio's] verbal *impasto* [and] the sounds and accents of D'Annunzio at his most crepuscular." This formulation is of interest in relation to Montale's own stylistic range, which moves between the conversational and the rhetorically intricate. D'Annunzio is still there at some level, chastened but not quite banished, as anyone who has heard Montale's fine recordings of his own poetry will sense at once.

Herein lies one of the many problems for the translator who, using a too-easy colloquialism against the grain of the aulic elements of Montale's style, can easily wreck his own efforts. There is no tone quite like this in English poetry. I have the impression that Galassi gets a firmer hold on Montale's idiom the further he goes. To begin with, there are one or two discordant notes that could readily be cleared up.

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In the early poem "Falsetto," where Montale admires the diving prowess of a young swimmer, Esterina Rossi, the translated opening was at first a mystery to me: "Esterina, twenty's out for you." This awkward locution seems to miss the directness of Montale although that is what he evidently aims for: "Esterina, i vent'anni ti minacciano." Arrowsmith is nearer the mark with "Esterina, your twentieth year now threatens," though "now" is an adventitious bit of underlining, perhaps, and the word "ti" gets ignored, though that is the point. Galassi goes on to an equally mysterious phrase which is lucid in the Italian, but here lacks clarity: "Your twenty falls are rising." A fall that rises sounds as if Esterina has tripped over something. Arrowsmith has, "Your twenty autumns mount." Montale wishes Esterina the dulcet music of "un concerto. . .di sonagliere." Galassi has a "concert of collarbells," a word so unidiomatic in English that it spoils the climax of this first stanza. Arrowsmith has improbably "a peal of bells"—surely too loudly triumphal a music for Montale. Doesn't he perhaps mean sheep-bells?

The beautiful early poem "The Lemon Trees" has a moment of elation at its close (rather unusual for Montale) where a sudden glimpse of the color of the fruit seems almost like a flash of the numinous. Galassi translates: "deep in us / the golden horns of sunlight / pelt their songs." Since this is a sort of fanfare, shouldn't those horns (*trombe*) be trumpets? Which is Arrowsmith's choice: "trumpets of gold pour forth / epiphanies of Light!" But that capital *L* plus exclamation mark won't do. Neither will "epiphanies"—the whole event is an epiphany and to call it that blatantly shows a lack of faith in Montale's art of evocation. In an uneven *Selected Poems* (1965) edited by the late Glauco Cambon, where Praz's "Arsenio" raises its head once more, there is an exceptionally graceful version of "The Lemon Trees" by "I.B."—Irma Brandeis, that is, Montale's *gentildonna americana*. She stays daringly close to the Italian at the close, risking a touch of invigorating foreignness, as the songs of the blazing yellow fruit pour "from the golden trumpets of solarity"—a perfect solution for the splendor of "le trombe d'oro della solarità." Galassi takes an expressive liberty of his own at the close of "Sarcophagi," which concludes in the Italian with "una danza di conigli" (a dance of rabbits). How can one conclude a poem in English with a word like *rabbits*, so sonically inferior to *conigli*? Galassi finds the elegant solution of "circled by a ring of dancing hares."

For years I have sought a readable version of a poem Montale wrote before he was twenty and then revised somewhat, "Meriggiare pallido e assorto." Neither Arrowsmith nor Galassi make much of this, but neither does anyone else. The structure of the poem dangles from a series of

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infinitives, the mysterious *meriggiare* leading the way. This word has been much discussed and Galassi gives us some interesting references to it. He renders it "sit the noon out." Arrowsmith has "to laze at noon," which is faithful to the string of infinitives that follows but lacks the serpentine if melancholy energy of the verb in its Italian context. I have heard people insist that Montale invented this verb—quite clearly a myth—and only the noun form *meriggio* (midday) has reached *The Cambridge Italian Dictionary*. I wonder whether Montale, who trained as a singer and had a thorough knowledge of Italian opera, might not have picked it up from Boito's libretto to Verdi's *Otello*? In that opera, the general loves to *meriggiare* in his garden on hot afternoons. The most difficult challenge to the translator awaits in the poem's final line. Galassi renders that imprisoning wall of the poem's conclusion "with broken bottle shards imbedded in the top." The preponderance of *b*s here makes the shards seem blunt rather than sharp and the use of "imbedded" muffles their impact even further. But what is one to do in English with the phonetic clash of "che ha in cima cocci aguzzi di bottiglia"?

Translation, as Michael Hamburger has said, is a mug's game, and he should know. You do what you can and there is always someone to niggle with the result. The present niggler wishes to conclude by saying that Galassi's progress through this giant undertaking gains in impressiveness once he has got underway. You feel in the end that he has learned much by being so ambitious, and that we as readers have been taught much about the demands of translating and the incomparable richness of the original text.

Charles Tomlinson

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LETTERS

To the editors:

In her most recent piece on Freud ("Freudians and Feminists in *Fin-de-siècle* Vienna," *Partisan Review*, Fall 1999), Edith Kurzweil is—to use her words in the first paragraph—"absolutely" wrong about the "progressive" Freud. Freud was a conservative democrat who was against the old world, autocracy, censorship, and all of that, but he stopped there. His work indicates that he thought there was nowhere else to go, nothing beyond the pieties of democracy and free enterprise in his day. Compared to an Austrian monarchist he was indeed progressive, as were the other democrats in his time. But in fact he was quite conservative, and that is why he has always been cherished by the powers that be.

Freud rejected Adler, Reich, Ferenczi, and others precisely because they were progressive and searched beyond the status quo.

Freud's view of women was the absolute conventional view of his time—they were weak, lying, and cheating, good for children, church, and cooking. He was quieter on this subject but not much different from that flagrant misogynist Otto Weininger, or his model in psychology, Arthur Schopenhauer. It could be said that most of Freud's views were conventional, beginning with the Oedipus complex, which was Original Sin dressed up as modern psychology.

It's high time the "progressive" Freud was left out of discussions of this master of disguise.

Martin Wain

Edith Kurzweil replies:

Anyone who has even dipped into Freud's own writings would know that he did not deal with issues of capitalism and free enterprise. Nor did he anticipate the current interest in deconstructing his texts. Freud assumed he would be "revolutionizing" our thinking by exploring the meaning of his patients' dreams and thoughts, and at times generalized too freely to cultural topics.

Of course, *progressive* in Freud's day was not what is progressive one hundred years later. However, in *Roget's Thesaurus* it still means "to proceed, go on, advance, gain ground, go ahead, make headway." Isn't that what Freud's investigations of the unconscious were all about? Also, Mr. Wain simplifies the complex issues that framed the political and theoretical differences among the early psychoanalysts. I suggest that he read the *Minutes of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society* and go on from there to Freud and *fin-de-siècle* history. Then he, too, would agree that for his time Freud's ideas were a radical break with traditional thinking, and that he was a progressive.

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